
NZLSAR News

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CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Well the summer has arrived and the hot dry weather is already having its affect on the East Coast. I can see water restrictions just around the corner and the time has come for our people in the high country fire fighting teams to dust off their gear. With the holiday season only a few weeks away I think it time for me to take a break from the paper war and start looking at some good river trips and relaxation in some of those favourite spots up in the backcountry.

The last few months have been a busy time for the National Committee, having organised this financial year's programme and completed a combined meeting and seminar with the Chairmen and Secretaries from each of the Regions. I believe this was a worthwhile exercise as it gave most of the key people throughout the country a chance to look at how NZLSAR has evolved and make recommendations for our future directions.

Many topics were covered including really important questions relating to representation, training, approved courses and how they work, funding and communication. Your Regional representatives all have a good understanding of the issues and policy

requirements of the organisation, so if you want further information, get hold of your District or Regional representatives. They should be able to provide the advice you require and address any problems you may have.

As with most volunteer organisations, communication is the key along with the need to look at the big picture. Co-operation between areas has become an important part of our operation. It is necessary to help us manage training, funding and operational issues especially in the climate of changing Police boundaries. To this end the National Committee is looking at ways to get the newsletters and other relevant information out to the majority of our members. Hence, if some of your people are not on local circulation lists or they think they are missing out on information, get onto either your District Reps or an Adviser. They should be able to rectify any problems that may arise. If all else fails get hold of us at the National Office and we will put you in contact with the appropriate people who can resolve issues in your area.

Looking back on the last 12 months it is pleasing to see the way our organisation has progressed. The operational performance of team members having undertaken "track and clue awareness" and "search methods" training has made a noticeable effect, as has

the Adviser Standards and Field Controller training in search management techniques.

The coming months will no doubt result in more incidents for us to respond to but hopefully there will be time for everyone to enjoy the festive season and the holiday break. On behalf of the National Committee I would like to wish everyone well for a Merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous New

Year. Enjoy your sojourn in the outdoors and come back refreshed for the challenges of 1998.

Regards to all

Graham Thorp
Chairman NZLSAR.

A tribute to Tasman: one of Dunedin's first civilian search dogs.

I arrived in New Zealand in 1988 from England. With a keen interest in the hills I soon joined the Otago Tramping Club and the Alpine Club. Like many others through the Tramping Club I got involved in SAR. Early in 1992, with a wedding present from my wife Kate - Tasman, a Curly-Coated Retriever - I joined the Dunedin group of New Zealand Alpine Search Dogs. Up until that time, I had had nothing to do with dogs or their training.

Tasman was formally trained to find people by "air scenting", although as described below he was also good at tracking. Air scenting dogs find people by smelling human scent in the wind or air. The source of the scent for such a dog is either the person themselves or an article that has the person's scent on it. The dog will quarter an area back and forth into the wind until it picks up the smell and then home in on it. In addition to finding people or articles, a search dog also has to "indicate" to its handler that it has made a find. To start with I was training Tasman to bark on find. This involves having the dog stay with the find and to keep barking until the handler arrives at the location the dog is barking. Tasman unfortunately never was a good barker. On finding someone, he would give off a few barks and then make no more noise until told to speak. Tasman never seemed to progress past this point of a few spontaneous barks. After trying this method for over 18 months, I gave up and Tasman was trained in the "recall-re-find" method. This method involves the dog returning to the handler after it has made a find and then taking the handler back to the

find. On returning to the handler the dog may indicate it has made a find in various ways, some dogs bark at their handlers (Tasman did this), others jump up and grab their handlers' arms, and others just sit in front of their handlers.

At age three years Tasman was consistently indicating finds of both people and articles on relatively long unseen exercises and was judged sufficiently competent to be used for operational purposes. It had only taken me in excess of a 1000 hours of training to get him to this stage! He was one of the first civilian search dogs in our District to be used for real operations. Over the next two and a half years we were called upon about 20 times to assist in looking for lost people. Tasman never did find anybody in a real incident, but then again the areas we were tasked to search never did contain the missing persons.

In remembering Tasman, two particular incidents come to mind that I shall not easily forget. The first of these I'm sure many in the Dunedin Police SAR team shall never forget. On a trip to Milford I rather think many had wished he never been born. As part of a contingent from Dunedin SAR, we were invited to take part in one of Works Civil Construction's annual avalanche training and awareness days. Tasman's consumption of a plate of saveloys the previous night, however, necessitated we all had to travel in the Police van with the windows wide open!

On a SAREX in North Otago, Tasman, I remember, really did me proud. A senior

search Adviser had drawn to my attention a lost article of clothing he had found during a search exercise for a missing woman. While we waited for a bloodhound to arrive to be scented on the article, I suggested I would use Tasman to search the nearby area within a short radius of the article. In deploying Tasman, he was drawn by air scent to the article (which annoyed me because I didn't want him messing up the scent for the bloodhound), and after a couple of sniffs of the article he was off and out of sight with his nose on the ground. The next thing I knew he came back and barked and off we went to find the woman about three hundred metres away from the article. The woman had been

out for over three hours, and hence the track he followed was equally as old. A rather impressive feat for a dog not trained to track.

Tasman was put to sleep at 5 and a half year's old this past July due to mast-cell tumour (cancer).

Thank you Tasman for all you ever taught me about search and search dogs and for your contribution to Dunedin SAR. I shall miss you and I shall always remember you.

Markus J Milne.
Otago District

SAR Paperex 97

Below is an article courtesy of the NZART magazine "Breakin". It is written by Noel ZL3QC and gives an interesting account of SAR from an AREC perspective

Search and Rescue personnel out in the field in wind, rain and snow, often wonder what it would be like controlling the operation from the snug comfort of the Field Search Headquarters (FHQ) instead of slogging through creeks, matagouri and steep gorges.

Once a year in Christchurch, the teams get their chance to sample the life of a Search Controller in a simulated exercise known as "Paperex". Working to a prepared scenario, usually based on real life situations, they learn how to deploy search teams, receive and analyse clues reported, obtain weather reports, handle media enquires and pressure, coordinate search patterns among several search teams, cope with emergency situations affecting the searchers, arrange for helicopter assistance if available, etc. In short they have to learn how to keep the whole operation running smoothly and be responsible for its successful conclusion. They also discover that quite often the controllers would rather be out in the bush slogging through the matagouri!

Communications for Paperex was arranged by Geoff Chapman ZL3PX/ZL3EX and his team from AREC. The setup involved eight separate FHQ's each communicating with

their own field teams and using the same scenario. The exercise was held in the Hillmorton High School in one large room and the "search teams" in various other rooms. Arranging communications without causing interference between the teams has been worked out over the years. Three teams were issued with hand held VHF radios using separate CD frequencies, two teams used PolSAR and Codan HF radios on SAR frequencies and three teams were direct-wired between remote control units with ZC1 microphones at each end.

The exercise scenario covers two days but the exercise itself is covered in two three hour sessions, 0900 to 1200 and 1230 to 1530. The trick of equating scenario time (dawn to dusk) with the three hours exercise "day" was achieved by using a neat little computer programme driving slave clocks at the various team and FHQ positions. Time is advanced by half a minute every "x" seconds depending on the time ratio required. All the wiring and other setting up was done on Saturday afternoon and we were back on deck at 0800 to issue radios and make sure all was in readiness.

The exercise started on time at 0900 and our main involvement then was to sort out any

equipment problems (mainly flat batteries) and to observe operating procedures. It was interesting to observe that the teams became increasingly absorbed in their tasks as the day went on, indicating that there was quite a sense of realism being experienced.

At the conclusion of the exercise the teams were debriefed and their performance with good and weak points highlighted. Radio procedure weaknesses were outlined, such as the importance of using geographic call signs instead of "base to Team 1", collecting thoughts before transmitting, sending

dictation speed and when to use it, and avoiding the use of "over and out" and so on.

Certificates of attendance were issued and these have high value because in real operations when places are being offered on helicopter lifts, it seems that those with certificates will get preference. Everyone went home satisfied that they had benefited from the exercise and now when they are bushbashing they can appreciate what goes on at Search Headquarters.

Noel ZL3QC
Canterbury District

Search and Rescue Education Resource Kit

Search and Rescue is an educational resource kit produced by the New Zealand Police Youth Education Service for students in Years 4 to 10 (ages 8 to 14).

The aim of the kit is to give young people an understanding of the role of the Police Search and Rescue section and to give them skills and knowledge to keep themselves, and others safe in the outdoors. They will also learn what to do if an emergency should arise.

The kit contains:

| | | |
|-----------------|-----------|--------------|
| Teaching Guide | Photopack | SAR Cards |
| 'What if' Cards | A Game | Case Studies |
| Newspaper page | 2 videos | |

The kit gives ideas of how these resources should be used. Any resource can be used independently of the others, or they can be put together into a unit of work.

Search and Rescue is available from police education officers at local police stations. The police education officer works in partnership with teachers to plan, teach and evaluate the programme. The kit is available free of charge. For more information, contact:

The Curriculum Officer. Youth Education Service
Police National HQ Box 3017. Wellington

Gill Palmer

Training Subcommittee News

The training Subcommittee in an attempt to more firmly get to grips with its training task has sat down, worked through the main players respective diaries and has set the following training schedule through to August 1998. With the many people involved we have probably, by our choice, precluded somebody from attending. However with the long lead time I would encourage all potential attendees to make themselves available and to take the opportunity of attending one of the listed Field Controller and Advisers Workshops. Included are the names of those persons the NFO has contacted and will be liaising with in the organisation of each Workshop.

| Date 1998 | Type of Workshop | District/where held | Contact person |
|----------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 14 March | FC Workshop | Dunedin | Roger Barrowclough Chas Tanner |
| 15 March | FC Workshop | Wanaka | Brian Ahern Chas Tanner |
| 24/25/26 April | Advisers Workshop | Taupo | Barry Shepherd |
| 16 May | FC Workshop | Greymouth | Terry Sweetman |
| 17 May | FC Workshop | Christchurch | Peter Cameron Dave Saunders |
| 27 June | FC Workshop | Wellington | Mike Sheridan Barry Paget |
| 28 June | FC Workshop | Palmerston North/ Wanganui | Dave Barker Dave Brockway |
| 17/18/19 July | Advisers Workshop | Christchurch | Peter Cameron |
| 8 August | FC Workshop | Hamilton | Barry Were |
| 9 August | FC Workshop | Rotorua | Murray van der Maas |

A perusal of the above will show a number of Districts not visited. Please be patient, funding provided, we intend to visit your District next financial year

Roscoe Tait

Training Subcommittee Chairman

The use of technology in Search and Rescue in New Zealand

Anyone who has "surfed" the net and searched on 'SAR' realises where the rest of the world has gone in applying technology to search and rescue. Whether it is GPS (Global Positioning Systems) or GIS (Geographical Information Systems) or cellular fax machines, the applications are slowly creeping in.

The purpose of this short article is to list out what is known to be happening in an attempt to share information.

Technology available today in New Zealand and applied in some SAR districts

- **Consensus Decision making model**

There is a model currently being used called Mattson consensus. This model which can effectively be scribbled on the back of an envelope or a whiteboard also has more sophisticated versions that run on DOS (Casie3) and Excel. The model basically takes decisions from a number of individuals on the probabilities of search areas (POA) and arrives at a consensus priority. As the search progresses the computer model analyses clues and completed search tasks and using some tricky mathematical formulae updates the POA.

Tom Clarkson - a Wellington Adviser has taken a version of the computer model from

the net and modified it slightly. He is more than willing to share an Excel version and advise on its use. He can be contacted at **(04) 568-6691** or **t.clarkson@xtra.co.nz**

- **Databases**

Computer databases are used in NZ SAR organisations for both operational and non operational reasons. They are an excellent aid to store and retrieve commonly used data.

Hawkes Bay use an Excel spreadsheet database to form teams, maintain records of team tasks and issue team briefing sheets. Talk to **Graham Thorp** the NZ Land SAR Chairman for details.

Here in Wellington we maintain an MS Access database of our first response team.

This database maintains all contact information that is then used for:

- Production of adviser contact lists
- Production of club contact lists
- Production of mailing labels for newsletters and training course details

Also maintained is a history of training and operational attendance. This attendance information is used for:

- Assessing team members qualifications
- Ensure team members are attending the required courses
- Maintaining statistics on operations and courses
- Planning future years training needs

This database is very flexible and powerful and can be adapted to meet local requirements. One of the next developments planned is using the database to form team schedules and briefing sheets for an operation - similar to Graham's Excel ideas.

I am more than willing to share this database with other SAR groups. Contact me at **(04) 562-8839** or **michael.sheridan@nbnz.co.nz**

- **Long lat conversion to NZMS grid coordinates**

Not sure where this came from but it is a simple DOS based programme that converts lat long to grid coordinates or visa versa. This can be useful for work with aircraft or some of the GPS systems.

Roscoe Tait in Auckland is the contact for this.

- **Urgency assessment model**
Another freely available program that I think **Roscoe Tait** in Auckland found on the net. Again contact Roscoe.
- **Portable phone technology**
Almost old technology now. However some districts do use cell phones as their

first means of communications as the coverage may be locally better than VHF.

Another aspect that should be thought of is cellular faxes. These can often be used at a road end to fax briefing sheets, missing person details, footprint detail etc from a base in town.

- **VHF networks**
The level of sophistication of some of the local VHF networks is very surprising. Usually organised and purchased by the volunteers, some districts have a network of permanent and portable repeaters in place and have augmented the Police supply of VHF radios with their own community funded radios.
- **GPS**
I have not yet heard of any local SAR groups using GPS units in the field. I am sure it is happening though with privately owned units being used by team members.

Technology currently available but not yet applied to SAR in NZ

- **SeI Call**
With the addition of a microphone with a number pad to our PoISAR radios, the technology is now available to connect our HF network to the telephone network. The Communications Sub committee is currently investigating this technology and its application to SAR.

The Internet is an interesting place to catch up on what is happening in SAR internationally. To catch up on the national scene we now maintain a web site at "**<http://www.sar.org.nz>**" - check it out sometime.

Mike Sheridan
Adviser Wellington District

Stop Press News Stop Press News Stop Press News Stop Press News

NZLSAR, from the work of the Communications Subcommittee, recently submitted a budget, looking ahead over the next four years to the Police for the upgrading or replacement of SAR communication equipment. The financial figures for 97/98 have been accepted by the department and it is now with Treasury as part of a larger package for their approval. If this comes to pass, the budget calls for the replacement of a number of VHF radios. If any SAR group is contemplating making, from their own funds, purchases of similar equipment, there may be an opportunity to "bulk buy" and make some worth while savings. If you wish to avail your group of this opportunity contact the **NFO** at the earliest.

Harris Trophy 1997

Thirteen teams of six to eight incredibly talented and fit SARbods from as far afield as Timaru and Hanmer competed on the 2nd November for the Harris Trophy.

This annual event, run for the twelfth time, is designed to test the ability of teams in the Canterbury District and is becoming increasingly competitive. The standard of SAR skills is noticeably improving each year. In fact the difference in scores between the first and last teams are so close that the rules will be looked at with a view to incorporating other aspects of SAR. Currently, although it is necessary to locate the patient within a certain time, and radio operating procedures are scored, the emphasis is on treatment and management of the victim. Maybe next year we'll include some "observation" exercises and maybe test specific search techniques? Or why not blindfold and handcuffed them?

Or perhaps we'll return to the same area and award extra marks to the team that finds a Red X radio that went out with a patient and never came home! We reckon we've the sharpest SAR teams in the country and anyone who disputes that claim is challenged to enter their best SARbods in the 1998 competition.

Incidentally, the injury this year was particularly gruesome, consisting of a bolt from a crossbow through the leg. Trousers with an extra couple of holes were issued to each patient and an elastic band under the trousers and around the calf kept the head on one side and the feathered bit on the other. Some blood and a tinge of blue to the lips

and ears completed the picture. It isn't easy to transport someone with a stick through a leg but everyone successfully trussed up their patient to avoid movement although points were deducted from a few teams who gnawed through the shaft to shorten it!

In the past there has always been some criticism about the accuracy of the grid references supplied to the competitors, so this year a GPS unit was used and guess what? There was still a disputed reference!

And the winner was - the Hanmer team! Methven were runners up and the Police came in third.

E-mail queries to **dave-s@chch.planet.org.nz** or write to me at **150 McCormacks Bay, Chch 8.**

Dave Saunders

Adviser Canterbury District

Search and Rescue Response for the 1997/98 Climbing Season

SAR services will continue to be provided by the Department of Conservation for the 1997/98 climbing season. Improvements have been made to the overall operation covering the following:

- The agreed updated Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) are in place for helicopter strop rescues, and are being adopted by all parties.
- The aircraft provider is now able to meet the Civil Aviation Authority regulations in relation to strop rescues.
- The role of the parties involved providing the service has been clarified for this season (DoC, Police and helicopter provider).
- Rescue equipment has been maintained.
- Resource material has been updated; eg. aerial photographs.

- Training needs have been reviewed and staged implementation commenced.
- Administrative procedures such as log keeping and debriefs have been reviewed and refined.
- The role and functions of the Police and DoC at the local level have been clarified and agreed for this season with Aoraki/Mt Cook staff.
- Temporary mountaineer staff have been employed and are receiving training in rescue techniques.

The development of SOPs has resulted in the mitigation of some of the high risk factors facing rescuers. .

Paul Dale

Department of Conservation.
Southern Regional Office

Editors Comments

To Graham, Marcus, Noel, Gill, Roscoe, Mike Dave and Paul a big thank your for your articles. To those who proof read and check the spelling or grammar, thank you also. To those who gave me articles which I have not published, many thanks for them. My apologies but please be patient and they will printed next time.

As Graham has mentioned the Christmas holidays are nearly upon us. To all those who have helped me in my job, I have met in my travels or contribute to SAR, I thank you and wish you all the very best for the Christmas festive season and New year.

Copy for the February News is most welcome and the close-off date is Friday 23 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 a phone call and a verbal description to me if you are diffident about writing has produced articles, so please contact me as the merits of this newsletter is entirely in the hands of the contributors.

Regards **John P Tristram** NFO