
NZLSAR News

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Chairman's Christmas Greetings

Greetings everyone. It's that time of the year again when we need to prepare for the coming festive season and all the associated problems that may be generated for search and rescue. With the millennium celebrations taking place it is going to be difficult to predict all the possible options that we may be confronted with but we are working on it and plans are well advanced in some areas.

The East Coast of both islands look to be the areas where most of the action will be and some of our groups may find themselves stretched to provide sufficient people to undertake the tasks that are put in front of them. As many of you will be aware our Gisborne Advisers have been planning for sometime to ensure they can cope with the influx of people to the area. If 2% of these people go into the hills and 2% of those get misplaced or start lighting fires both Search and Rescue and DoC will have some problems.

The key will be a flexible approach and an up to date call-out list for the holiday period. Remember Y2K and the need for a call-out system that doesn't rely on the normal communication methods. If people on the East Coast require backup it is likely that they will need to be supported by other areas away from the Coast. Hence the need for all areas to be prepared for a support role in addition to their normal function of responding to local incidents. Rex Aubrey, John Tristram and the Communications Subcommittee members have been working hard in the lead up to this time and should have the second issue of the VHF radios and base sets released in time for the holiday break. Repeaters are also part of the purchase agreement but it would appear that the suppliers will be unable to meet a delivery prior to Christmas.

At National level, the last Committee meeting was held in mid-November at the Porirua Police College and was combined with a meeting of Regional Chairmen and Secretaries from throughout the country. This was a very useful exercise and although many of us were suffering from overwork syndrome, significant progress was made and all our regional people will now be fully informed of the direction being followed by the National Committee and the issues currently being faced by NZLSAR. The feedback received from the Regions has been very useful in formulating our policy so it will be good to have these views included in the coming year. Other points of note from the meeting include:-

- The review panel, which has been looking at NZLSAR's direction, is progressing towards the formulation of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Police. This is considered to be the key to the ongoing partnership with the Police, as it will form the basis of the provision of a credible Search and Rescue service to the public. The final document should clearly identify the levels of service required, funding needs at all levels and the responsibilities of Police and volunteers in the delivery of the service.
- All aspects of the MoU were discussed and again it was very useful to have the feedback from the Regions and Districts. It should ensure a balanced document that meets the needs of all areas. The next step in the process will involve the moulding of the opinions into the standard document and negotiating the appropriate levels of service, responsibilities and response with the Police. If anyone wants further information about the MoU and its purpose feel free to contact me,

the NFO or any of the people who attended the November meeting.

- Two new Subcommittee Chairmen have been appointed. Peter Cameron of Christchurch has taken up the challenge of the Specialist Subcommittee and Steve Davis, who looks after the NZLSAR web page, will be the new Chairman of the Communications Subcommittee. We welcome Peter and Steve to their respective positions and look forward to continued progress in these key areas of search and rescue management. In the last couple of weeks since the meeting many messages and discussions have taken place to bring Peter and Steve up to speed with the issues confronting their respective positions. It shouldn't be long before they are fully briefed and running with the issues.
- Affiliation of various groups with NZLSAR was discussed at length and will be the subject of a further paper. Affiliation issues are seen differently in different parts of the country and it is not clear which option has the best long-term advantages. Discussion with the Regions will continue.
- A reassessment of the regional boundaries has been undertaken and it was agreed at the November meeting that a new Tasman Region should be created to remove the problems of having a Region that spans Cook Strait. A realignment of the old Region Three and Four boundaries will be undertaken to meet operational needs of the new Police District boundaries and other geographical considerations. Hawkes Bay and Gisborne will become a new Eastern Region and Wellington will merge with Palmerston North, Wanganui and Taranaki areas.
- The changes require an update of the Constitution. It will also be necessary to discuss some of the finer points with the affected Regions to ensure that we have a workable system. In the meantime, the Tasman Region will be meeting to sort out its representatives and attendance at future meetings.
- Data collection to assist us in formulating lost person behaviour analysis and other management tools is taking another step forward with the formation of a working group under Gerry Prins. This group will be looking at the information we require and the way it will be collected. Some solid work is

required initially to determine the basic data requirements. Once this is completed the process of gathering information should be more straightforward but it will only work if our people in all areas are diligent in completing the data sheets accurately and getting them into Gerry for incorporation in the system.

- Patient Care Standards have now been approved by the National Committee. Approval raises a number of issues relating to performance standards and make-up of our search teams. This created a lot of interesting discussion at the meeting and the effects of this decision will start to trickle down to Districts over the coming year. Essentially it means that we have a responsibility to ensure we have adequately qualified people on hand to provide a level of care that is appropriate for the needs of a victim when they are located or rescued.
- Roscoe Tait, NZLSAR Secretary and Chairman of the Training Subcommittee) unveiled the new Work Book that the Subcommittee has been developing over the last couple of years. It will enable individuals to work through their training requirements at their own pace and provide them with hard copy record of their work. The Work Book is also arranged to link in with the Field Guide issued earlier in the year. Paragraph numbers and sections have been matched up to assist with the learning process and ease of finding the answers of problems that are set.

As you can see the National Committee, and our Regional Representatives have had a busy time over the last twelve months which not only brings the year to a close, it also brings an end to the 20th century. With that in mind and as this is the last NZLSAR News of the century I am particularly pleased to be able to thank all our members throughout the country for the outstanding commitment that has been provided for search and rescue over so many years. It is the dedication of so many people who have given of their time freely and without complaint that has built up the excellent reputation we have with many organisations. The challenge will be to maintain and improve on this reputation in the new millennium.

On behalf of the National Committee and the National Field Officer I wish you all well for the coming festive season and hope you can find the time to have a safe and rewarding holiday break. Thank you all again for your efforts and

we look forward to catching up with you all in the New Year and the new century.

Graham Thorp
Chairman NZLSAR.

New Rescue Net Purchased

The Lakes District Air Rescue Trust has imported a new 10 person rescue net from Europe, especially designed for avalanche rescue/transport of rescuers, whilst having a much wider use in flood/marine/fire/accident and medical rescue etc.

The "Eldart Rescue Net" was trialed by Lakes District Air Rescue and Queenstown SAR Committee member Owen Genty-Nott whilst holidaying in Austria last year, and seeing the potential for its use in New Zealand, commenced negotiations to import one. At a landed cost of near \$11,000.00 it has NZ



CAA approval and operating protocols have been drawn up and approved covering the various applications it could be used for. Capable of being transported (folded) within the helicopter, or for short distances with up to ten rescuers in the net underslung from an AS350B2 or 355F1 of which the Lakes District Trust has collectively seven machines operating out of Queenstown and Te Anau, capable of covering an area in excess of 50,000 sq.klms. Lesser loads are approved for lighter helicopters, and search dogs can also be transported when clipped in by their harness.

These nets are used extensively in European alpine rescue situations, especially during last northern winters' disastrous avalanches in the Austrian and Swiss Alps. Local SAR members are currently being familiarised with this unit."

Picture: "The Eldart Rescue Net"

Owen Genty-Nott.

Executive Secretary/Rescue Instructor for Lakes District Air Rescue Trust

Its time to collect the information

I have just got back to Wanganui, having been to our Region 3 NZLSAR meeting at Palmerston North, (a small provincial city south east of Wanganui) where as is the norm, a number of interesting issues came up.

One subject in particular was the collecting of search and rescue statistics for future use in SAR, a subject the Police are also looking at.

This subject is one, which I am very interested in and would like to see developed in New Zealand. The sort of thing I am on about is found in the book, "Search Is An Emergency", pages 70-80, or can be downloaded off the World Wide Web. Some excellent bully can be found at SARBC, the website of SAR in British Columbia.

I have downloaded heaps of information from the net and bound it into a couple of books so that it is on hand when needed. Always good to look at to refresh the memory and give search managers food for thought.

What I am suggesting here that it is time for us to collect our own information, stats, call it what you will, so that we have some facts of our own to assist in search management. While the overseas statistics are great and a very useful tool, they do apply to overseas and I believe that in some areas there will be considerable differences.

For example, the travel distances for hunters and hikers (trampers?) in BC will be different to hunter and trumper distances in New Zealand, simply because of the type of country they go into and the Kiwi approach to outdoor pursuits in New Zealand.

There is the obvious information we need to collect which pretty much copies what can be found in the book mentioned above and info at SARBC.

That is: Types of lost person, distance travelled, up hill/down hill, travel distances and times for various types of NZ terrain, cause of operation:- lost, injured, poor judgement etc, behaviour characteristics of the various groups.

I would like to see it taken a step further and include collecting information on what techniques/resources were used to complete an operation. (Whether successful or not.)

For example, whether Track and Clue Awareness Teams were used, SAR dogs, (whether Police or Civilian Search Dogs), voice or visual contact, hasty search, containment. Also important is the mode of rescue/recovery, whether Modified Mattson or Cassie 3 used at all. We need to know what other resources were used:- helicopter, aircraft, (search patterns used, search height and speeds), trained Aircraft Observers used.

There is probably more we could add, however the point is that we do need to start collecting this type of information sooner rather than later.

I have used SARBC Lost Person Behaviour information in various searches and have found it to be very helpful, particularly in searches for what are termed as despondent, children and Alzheimer's sufferers.

The Lost Person characteristics and behaviour for these categories will be pretty much the same the world over. I have found the SARBC Lost Person characteristics for these categories to be right on the nail and I consider them in every search.

I would go so far to say that if you are not considering this type of information when planning your search, it's time you did!!!

You may be pleasantly surprised at the similarities and the results of applying this kind of information to your search.

Phil Pollero

Sergeant O/C SAR, Wanganui

*In reply to Phil. NZLSAR recognises the importance of improving the SAR data collection. As mentioned in Graham's article a small working group of **Dave Barker, Mike Sheridan, Ross Gordon and Gerry Prins** has been set up to look at a range of questions in regard the collection of material for better SAR management. Such questions as what information is required, how and who will collect it, who will process and hold it and how can it be used for SAR are all to be considered. The current data collection is via the Police P130 form and if any changes are to be made to this form it is hoped to have these in place by 1st July 2000, being the start of the next financial year. **NFO***

NZLSAR Awards



The NZLSAR Committee in recognition of the outstanding contribution to land search and rescue by a number of people has recently presented to them a NZLSAR Award. On left is Chairman Graham Thorp presenting the Award to Don Bogie. In attendance is Senior Sergeant John Lovatt SAR O/C from the Eastern District and High Logan the Director General of the

Conservation Department. Below is a picture of Ray Anstis, a long time stalwart of SAR in the Wairarapa being presented with the Award by Region Four Representative Mike Sheridan.



Tribute to Lawrence "Boey" Rata

Recently Whakatane Land SAR lost a much admired and respected member, Boey Rata when his helicopter crashed. Below is a tribute from Ray Walker an Adviser in Whakatane and then Pat Boons attempts to put into words his feelings as a "SAR customer" and being saved by the skill of Boey.

The volunteers of New Zealand Land Search and Rescue contribute many thousands of hours of their personal time to the cause with little or no recognition other than that special satisfaction derived from helping others and overcoming the challenges laid down in times of trouble.

For some of the NZLSAR volunteers their commitment and dedication to their duties become part of their life and its those people, mostly unknown to the masses, who are the backbone of NZLSAR

One such person was Lawrence Rata, a key member of the Whakatani Land Search and Rescue.

Lawrence was simply known as "Boey" or Laurie to those who knew him. He was born and grew up as part of a large family on the East Coast near TeKaha in the North Island.

Boey joined Whakatane Land SAR in the winter of 1993 when he simply walked and joined our AGM at the Whakatane Police Station. He was deeply involved with the New Zealand Mountain Safety at the time.

Boey joined our SAR group as a foot slogger like the rest of us and it wasn't long before he had advanced to the position of Team Leader where we began to see his meticulous attention to detail and his very responsible attitude come to the fore.

Years later we to learn of Boey's impressive past with the SAS, a fact he never directly mentioned. He also never mentioned for a long while after joining our SAR group that he was a licensed helicopter pilot and a licensed helicopter flight instructor.

Pats story

My brief association with Boey was both dramatic and unforgettable. You do not

forget someone whose courage saves your life.

Boey, a talented engineer by trade, was a quiet achiever with high personal standards for himself and his family. When he set his mind to a task you could be sure he would achieve it.

A few years ago Boey purchased his first helicopter and formed his own company training future pilots on a part time basis.

His involvement with SAR increased in intensity as, apart from his regular Team Leader and SAR Committee duties, he became our SAR rescue pilot and the nucleus of the Whakatane Land Search and Rescue Group.

There were many SAR exercises, many SAR missions and a number of rescues in the rugged ranges of the Urewera country, executed in difficult conditions with precision and skill of a true professional. Rescues that never made the headlines and were lucky if they made the local papers. Boey never wanted it any other way.

On September 29th 1999 Boey tragically lost his life in his helicopter in the upper reaches of the Motu.

He will always be remembered dearly as a man of strength and pride, a man of integrity and compassion for others, a man of intellect and talent, a man who strove for what he wanted, a man of real values, a man who cherished his family, a man who risked his life to save others.

It is no wonder New Zealand Land Search and Rescue is among the worlds best voluntary rescue organisation when we have people of this man's calibre entwined in the system.

Boey is survived by his wife Karena and their two sons Ngahere and TeRawhiti, eight and three years respectively.

Ray Walker. Adviser Bay of Plenty District.

I was trapped for ten days in the Manangaatuihi Gorge in the Ureweras between Waimana and Whakatane Rivers. I made my way down the gorge for the first three days. It was in flood with white water. On the third day I came to an area of fallen trees and large rocks and the stream

disappearing around a corner. The white water made negotiating the fallen trees extremely dangerous and the only way I could find out what was around the corner was by getting there. If I managed this and conditions were as bad as they looked I would not be able to get back to my present spot. As I was now trapped, with some injuries as well as being in a weakened state, I made myself as comfortable as conditions allowed and awaited events.

On the tenth day Whakatane Police contacted Peter Shaw the DoC Field Officer in Opotiki at 1300 hours. He immediately rang SAR Adviser Ray Walker who was at work in Whakatane. Ray quickly arranged for Boey who was working in Kawerau and who is the owner and pilot of a helicopter to rendezvous with Pete. Alan McDonald was then called as radio communicator. They had the helicopter in the search area by 1500 and I was taken out of the gorge by 1630.

In a letter of appreciation I sent to the Whakatani Beacon I wrote:-

From my point of view on the 24th May I was settling down into my makeshift camp for the night when the helicopter arrived with Boey and Pete. The situation was so perilous I began to frantically wave them away. The set look on Pete's face told me that that was never an option.

It was only later that I found out the high degree of fine skill and flying ability it took for Boey to bring the helicopter down into the stream. The

water having calmed down considerably. To Boey's right in this narrow gorge were heavy branches growing from the steep side. With immense determination and extreme concentration he kept his rotor blades inches away from those branches.

It was Boey's sharp eyes that had spotted my face and white woollen hat amongst the trees in the rapidly fading light. The pieces of brightly coloured plastic and nylon from my equipment I had put out as signals couldn't be seen in the gloom. Under these dangerous conditions Boey would have been perfectly entitled to return to base and given the exact location for me to be picked up by ground searchers the following morning.

Boey never hesitated. He was not to know that my left arm was hanging out of its socket and I had other injuries and was suffering from advanced hypothermia with a core temperature of 34 degrees. He didn't know my life expectancy was to be measured in hours. He together with Pete had come to a job and there was no way they were not going to complete it.

I owe my life to the courage, determination and outstanding flying skills of Boey Rata. Now my deepest sympathy goes out to his wife Karena and their two young children at this time of their heartbreak. Boey has gone, but for those who were privileged to know him, he can never be forgotten

Patrick Boon Tauranga

1999 Taranaki Annual SAR Competition

On Sunday 13th June 1999 the annual Taranaki SAR competition was held in the Okoki Domain on inland hill country approximately 20 minutes drive from New Plymouth. This year the event was organised by the Taranaki Police SAR Squad giving the Land Advisers the opportunity to compete if they wished. Each SAR Squad member was given an area to come up with a scenario, marking sheet and competency. This year seven teams competed:- New Plymouth Tramping Club, Egmont Alpine Club, Tainui Rescue, Central SAR, Deerstalkers, KOPAC and Taranaki Alpine Club.

The competition commenced at 1100 hours after a briefing and the teams had 15 minutes at each scenario with a five minute change over period. This year teams were tested on:-

Helicopter safety. With a helicopter statically on site, this was a theory test on landing procedures, safety around the machine, boarding and disembarking etc.

Tracking. Starting from a given point each Team had to track a person and at the end explain what they had seen.

Grid/contact search. Each Team was given a small area, which they had to divide up and search for a number of clues and articles.

First aid. A test to see that the ABC's on a patient were carried out and an injury treated.

Communications. The new Police supplied repeaters come with several parts and the test here was to quickly erect a similar repeater.

Party and individual equipment. A check to see that each person and Team had sufficient equipment for a 24 hour stay away from base as

well as sufficient gear to make a patient comfortable. Excessive equipment or weight also lost marks.

Article observation. 22 articles were hidden and were observed through a window.

The competition was completed at 1400 and a meal and refreshments were provided to the participants. Each Team consisted of at least four members and a maximum of six people. The winning Team was then presented with the Trophy and each winning Team Member with a miniature trophy.

This year the Taranaki Alpine Club team was third, second was KOPAC and the winner was **Central SAR**. Very few points separated the seven Teams and the standard of the competitors was high. All participants had an enjoyable day and next years competition, which is being arranged by the Police SAR Squad, will be harder and more in-depth.

Robbie O Keefe

Sergeant, O/C Taranaki Police SAR Squad.

Why parents get gray hair:

The boss of a big company needed to call one of his employees about an urgent problem with one of the main computers. He dialed the employees home phone number and was greeted with a child's whispered, "Hello?" Feeling put out at the inconvenience of having to talk to a youngster the boss asked, "Is your Daddy home?" "Yes," whispered the small voice. "May I talk with him?" the man asked. To the surprise of the boss, the small voice whispered, "No." Wanting to talk with an adult, the boss asked, "Is your Mommy there?" "Yes," came the answer. "May I talk with her?" Again the small voice whispered, "no". Knowing that it was not likely that a young child would be left home alone, the boss decided he would just leave a message with the person who should be there watching over the child. "Is there any one there besides you?" the boss asked the child. "Yes" whispered the child, "A policeman." Wondering what a cop would be doing at his employee's home, the boss asked, "May I speak with the policeman?" "No, he's busy," whispered the child. "Busy doing what?" asked the boss. "Talking to Daddy and Mommy and the Fireman," came the whispered answer. Growing concerned and even worried as he heard what sounded like a helicopter through the ear piece on the phone the boss asked, "What is that noise?" "A hello-copper," answered the whispering voice. "What is going on there?", asked the boss, now alarmed. In an awed whispering voice the child answered, "The search team just landed the hello-copper". Alarmed, concerned and more than just a little frustrated the boss asked, "Why are they there?" Still whispering, the young voice replied along with a muffled giggle: "They're looking for me"

Roscoe Tait Adviser Auckland

Editors Comments

To a big thank you to Graham, Owen, Phil, Ray and Pat for your articles. To those who proof read and check the spelling and grammar, thank you also. Copy for the **February News** is most welcome and the close-off date is **Thursday 27 January 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 . Finally thanks to all who have aided me in my endeavours over the last year. All the very best for the festive season, the New Year and may the millennium bug treat you kindly. Regards **John P Tristram** National Field Officer