

EXERCISE LORD SAREX REVIEW.

Introduction:

This review should be read in conjunction with the Exercise planning documents.

Exercise LORD was unique in the following aspects:

The Exercise was held over a two day period.

The Planning for the exercise was regionally focused rather than Unit Focused.

The Exercise format allowed for one on water scenario controlled by a Police lead IMT as well as two secondary IMT's table topping various scenarios.

For the first time that I am aware of the exercise format allowed for the IMT's to complete the IMT change over procedure.

The On water scenario was able to be progressed from the Search and rescue stage on day one to the recovery stage on day two.

The opportunity was presented to involve Surf and Coastguard Wet crews in the process of proof testing a new procedure for the transportation of Surf RIBS by Coastguard vessels.

The opportunity was also taken to test the activation Procedures between the Whitianga Coastguard Unit and Pauanui Coastguard Unit as outlined in Project Tripod.

Exercise Summary:

Exercise Lord was instigated by the Waikato Police District SAR Squad O/C Sgt Vince Ranger.

A meeting was held by the appointed Exercise planning team, Sgt Vince Ranger, Stuart Lowth, Mike Judd and Graham Caddy at Coastguard Eastern regions HQ, October 2015

The Whangamata Coastguard Unit were confirmed as the ICP and Hosts for the exercise. The format, possible Scenarios, required outcomes and participants were also confirmed. The planning team were then tasked by the Exercise Directors.

A formal Exercise warning notice was prepared, which also contained the invitations for Coastguard Units to participate, and circulated to all identified participants.

This was followed by a comprehensive Exercise Instructions paper which outlined the format, timings and logistics of the Exercise as well as the Exercise Safety plan and Communications plan.

Day one of the Exercise involved the IMT members meeting at Whangamata Coastguard Shed at 8am. Participants were formed into three separate IMT. One team was tasked to the on water scenario whilst the other two teams were tasked to separate table top exercises.

The on water Crews were activated at approx. 0845Hrs to conduct a search for a missing vessel in the Alderman Island area. They were joined later in the afternoon by a CAP from Northern Region.

Midway through the day the IMT involved with the on water scenario were rotated giving the opportunity to exercise the IMT hand over procedures.

Day one concluded at approximately 1615Hrs.

The preplanning for Day twos activities were put on hold due to uncertain weather and sea conditions. On water activities were to cease at 1200 Hrs on day two to allow for a full SAREX hot debrief at the ICP.

With some improvement in the weather, day two of Exercise LORD presented the planning team the opportunity to take the previous days on water scenario from the search phase into the recovery stage whilst at the same time giving the on water crew a good work out with several search pattern options being exercised.

The IMT personal were introduced to the Mass rescue Operation plan for the Waikato and BOP Police Districts followed by the chance to have a play with a mass rescue scenario.

The day concluded with all SAREX participants taking part in the hot debrief held at the Whangamata Coastguard Premises.

Learning Summary:

Project Tripod

The activation process involving the Whitianga Unit and the Pauanui Unit as outlined in Project Tripod was trialled on both days of this exercise with a successful outcome.

Both Units report that the Activation process worked well with minimum delays experienced.

The system has yet to be put to the test on an actual Cat 1 or Cat2 incident but the initial results are promising.

Transportation of Surf RIBS

This exercise involved the use of Surf RIBS to search the Coastline of an off shore group of Islands.

During the planning stage it was recognised that there were some problems with the method put forward for the transportation of Surf RIBS on Coastguard CRV's. An alternative was put forward and trialled during the exercise. It would be fair to say that there is a mixed reaction to the alternative method. There are also questions around the role of Surf personal in off shore SAR activities.

Recommendation: It is recommended that a joint working group of Coastguard, Surf and Police Personal be formed to have a look at the big picture in regards to the involvement of Surf in off water SAR incidents and how Coastguard and Surf can best combine their resources and experience for the enhancement of response to Marine SAR Incidents.

Exercise Planning:

As previously stated the planning for this exercise was more from a Regional perspective with the ICP Unit providing a representative to take the role of the Exercise logistics Officer. The regional overview took a huge amount of work off the shoulders of the Unit and had the added bonus of having a Unit work in cooperation with the CER entity for a common purpose.

Recommendation: It is recommended that CER should assume the role of Exercise coordinator for any SAEX involving multiple Coastguard Units or outside Agencies.

It is further recommended that the CER Operations Manager along with the CER SAR coordinators should explore the possibility of establishing a regional planning template in respect to future SAREX using the model used during Exercise LORD as a start point. The use of a more formally structured planning process played its part in making Exercise LORD a success.

Exercise execution:

The concept of Multiple IMT's rotating between the on water scenario and table top exercises proved to be very successful. The continuing problem of throwing an IMT together and expecting a cohesive team effort from word go was evident once again during this exercise. Different leadership styles also produced varying team results within the IMT's. The concept of trained IMT's attached to identified coastguard ICPS, as outlined in project Tripod, will go some way to alleviating this problem.

Although I would acknowledge that each SAR incident will have its own unique challenges I would pose the question, are we at the stage where we could develop a template or memory aid in respect to the initial action required by an IMT leading up to the formulating of the IAP?

Communication:

As with most SAREX or for that matter most SAROPS the majority of feedback received was on the subject of communication.

Without any disrespect for any of the participating Radio Operators it became evident very early during the on water scenario that there is a huge gap between the expectations placed on a Unit Radio Operator and that expected from an IMT Radio Operator. The new Radio operator training matrix highlights the extra training and experience required by Radio Operators to successfully make this transition.

It was noted that three out of the four Coastguard CRV's involved in Exercise LORD were equipped with communication tablets. Electronic communication was used in the activation and briefing stage of the exercise quite successfully. Attempts at using electronic communication for tasking purposes were not so successful largely due to the fact that we had no central point set up to receive this type of communication and no one tasked to monitor incoming emails. This was corrected on day two with some promising results.

It would be fair to say that some of the problems, encountered by the Radio Operators, whilst attempting to pass on tasking's to the on water crews was down to the fact that there was a breakdown of communication with the Operations team. It took too long for tasking's to be transferred to the comms team and on occasions secondary tasking's were being assigned before the primary tasking had been completed. Routine enquiries from the CRV's re tasking's sometimes received an off the cuff reply which may or may not have been consistent with the IAP. I was aware of at least one instance of a CRV self-tasking contrary to the established IAP.

Recommendations:

All Radio Operators operating in the IMT environment should meet the training requirements as set out in the new Radio Operators training matrix.

IMT Radio Operators should be assigned members of the ICP Units IMT and take part in regular training to hone their skills re CRV tasking. This concept is clearly defined in Project Tripod.

Within the Operations team (in the absence of a logistics Manager) we should establish a Communications team.

This team would operate under the direct supervision of a SAR Coordinator who would operate as 2 I/C to the Operations manager.

The team could consist of a lead Radio Operator, a secondary Radio Operator to maintain the Radio log and relieve on the Radio when required and on larger operations an Electronic communications operator. This function could be the responsibility of the SAR Coordinator on smaller operations.

The SAR Coordinator would have the responsibility for the following:

To ensure that tasking's received from the Operations team are translated into a format which is clearly understood by the on water search teams.

To ensure that a search asset has completed a primary tasking and provided a situation report before being re tasked.

To ensure on water search teams are providing regular situation reports on their activities and any change of weather conditions which may affect search planning.

To Liase with the Operations Manager on any change of circumstance which may have an effect on the established IAP.

To detect and correct any attempt by on water search teams to self-task contrary to the IAP.

To promptly provide any operational information as required by the on water search teams

To undertake any other function that may be delegated to him by the Operations manager.

This type of system has been in use at Whitianga for the last 12 months and has proved invaluable in preventing the regular distractions which plague the Operations Manager and ensuring that there is a clear communication pathway between the on water search teams and the Operations team.

Conclusion:

This review paper represents the view of the author only and is intended as a base paper on which members of the exercise planning team can build with their own observations and recommendations.

At the end of the review process we should have clearer picture of what action needs to be taken to implement the recommendations agreed on.

Graham Caddy

SAR Coordinator CER.

Report on Marine SAR “Exercise LORD” held at Whangamata 14/15 November 2015

Introduction

All Search and Rescue agencies now operate under the Coordinated Incident Management System (2nd Edition) (CIMS 2) protocols. In Category 1 searches the Incident Controller (IC) will be from the Police and it is important that Incident Management Teams (IMT's) use common guidelines and procedures.

As an IMT qualified member of the Tairua-Pauanui Land Search and Rescue Group I was invited to attend the Maritime SAREX (Exercise Lord) as a moderator. My brief was to observe the IMT's used during the SAREX and note differences between LandSAR and Maritime procedures.

I have used the Land Search and Rescue Response Guidelines (December 2014) as my guide when comparing procedures observed on this SAREX.

IMT Procedures

It was pleasing to observe that the procedures employed by the IMT's throughout this exercise were the same as used on LandSAR SAROPS. While some procedures went under slightly different titles, in most cases the order of proceedings was identical and members of any SAR organisation (barring Subject Matter Expertise) could easily slot into any IMT and function effectively.

There are, however, a number of areas observed, probably more specific to this SAREX, which I would like to comment on.

1. **Search Urgency.** At no time did I see a Search Urgency Assessment completed. While the urgency is often very obvious it does need to be recorded as it can and should have bearing on the response required. It should also be dynamic in that any changes in the urgency should be noted and appropriate changes made in the response.
2. **Scenario Weighting.** In the initial briefing, gathering facts, presenting them on the board, deciding on possible scenarios and completing the IAP were given as initial priorities. The IMT tried to complete the Scenario Weighting Form. The scenarios in the initial response process should be facts based and very broad and relate directly to Search Area Determination and Reflex Tasking. The more subjective Scenario Weighting should occur further down the track when the bigger picture becomes a little clearer.
3. **Initial Action Plan (IAP).** The IAP is an important part of the IMT process. It really belongs to the IC and I believe it has 3 main purposes; to define the Mission and what needs to be achieved over a defined period, It focuses/refocusses the Team throughout the period and it is a tool for changeover briefings. While completing the IAP is

important it should not detract from gathering resources, getting Reflex tasking tasked and under way, gathering intel etc.

4. **Comms/IMT Information Flow.** In this exercise Comms and the IMT were in the same room alongside each other. The noise levels and distractions caused did, on a number of occasions, detract from operations. Further, there was no clear messaging paper trail so that incoming or outgoing messages could be traced. On a number of occasions important information failed to get to the correct recipients and often queries were answered without being recorded. A more formal messaging system/form needed to be used and a procedure for the paper trail to follow through to filing was required.
5. **Timelines.** Timelines are a very powerful visual tool. They need to be clear, easy to understand and uncluttered. It is often best to divide the info presented into categories and present each category on parallel timelines on the same board. (Say Facts, Operations, Weather for example. I thought the timeline on the main scenario was too cluttered and tried to present too much in one place. Brief notes on the timeline – more detailed info in the log or files!!
6. **Search Area Determination.** The search area decided upon was massive and, given the resources available, would have taken days to search. There was no attempt to segment and prioritise the search area. Dividing the search area into smaller, manageable chunks and prioritising them would probably have directed the best resources into more likely areas earlier. (Easy looking from the outside !!!!)

Conclusion

This was a an excellent learning experience for all involved. From my perspective the IMT procedures under the CIMS protocols work just as well for Maritime searches as they do for Land searches.

Thanks for including me in the SAREX.

Regards

Trev Butler

Admin/Sec Tairua-Pauanui LSAR.

SAREX - LORD - 14-15 NOVEMBER 2015

SAFETY BRIEFING

- The emphasis during the entire Exercise is **SAFETY FIRST**
- At no time should anyone take any unnecessary risks that could endanger any Exercise participants or cause damage to any vessel or equipment. Any accidents that do occur need to report to Exercise control as soon as possible.
- Any safety issues arising during the SAREX will be managed according to the respective Units Health and Safety plan.
- All Coastguard Units and any other Agency or Group participating in the Exercise are directly responsible for their own personnel & equipment.
- All Radio traffic will be prefixed with '**SAREX SAREX**' and in the event of a real time emergency the Prefix '**NO DUFF NO DUFF NO DUFF**' is to be used.
- All normal Radio channels will be monitored and **Marine VHF Channel 66** will be used for all SAREX communications.
- An **ALL STATIONS** call **prior** to the SAREX commencing will be made to advise other Mariners of the exercise and again on **completion** of the exercise by Exercise Control.
- Communication between SAREX ICP Base will be via VHF radio and / or cellphone
- All participants of the exercise are to be fully prepared for the exercise and dress accordingly. Each person needs to wear their Lifejacket when on or near water and to have a form of communication that will work during the SAREX.
- Standard Operating Procedures must be followed at all times.
- In case of an emergency, contact ICP Base, precede call with "NO DUFF x 3" and inform them of the nature of emergency.
- Evacuation Point for the SAREX will be the Whangamata Wharf, unless directed to a different location by the IMT.
- Each Participant needs to complete a contact form to acknowledge they have received this brief and to put their contact details down. Participants need to sign in and out if leaving the exercise. A VHF radio call is suffice to do this.
- TR's are to be done as per your units SOP when leaving and returning to base.

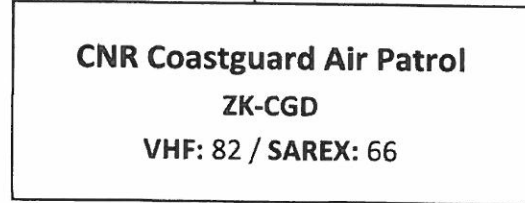
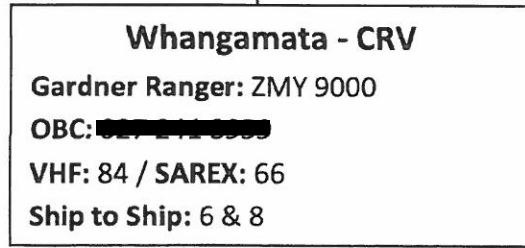
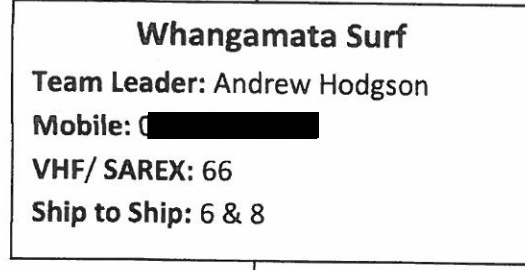
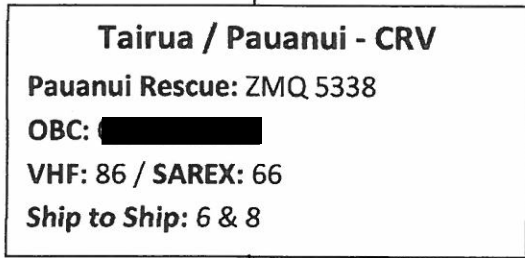
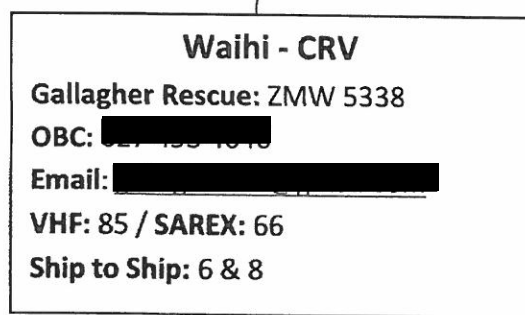
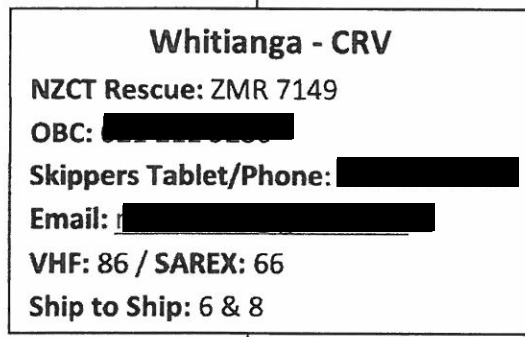
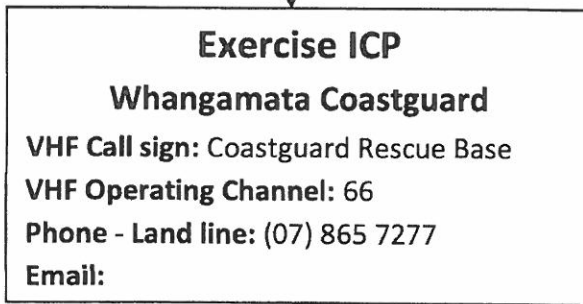
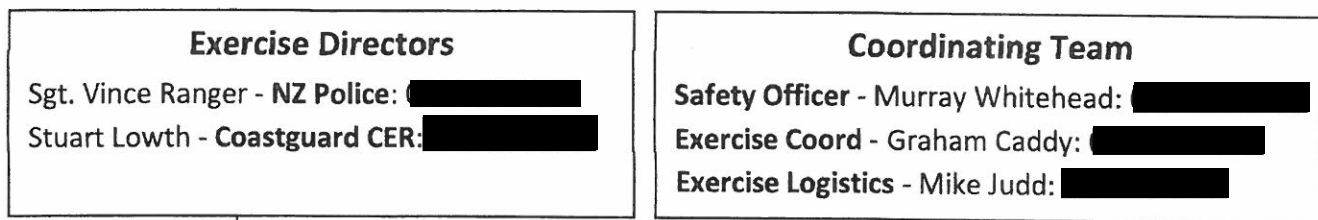
SAREX ICP Base & contact number
Coastguard Whangamata
PH: 07 865 7277
VHF: 66

SAREX Safety Officer:
Murray Whitehead
M: 027 210 5196



EASTERN REGION

EXERCISE "LORD" COMMUNICATION PLAN



Notes:

Marine SAREX 534 14/15th November Informant

Name OTT/Sam

35 Aintree street

Mt Maunganui

Idee went with his mate Harry for a fishing trip from Coromandel to Tauranga. I took them up to Coromandel and dropped them off. I then drove back here with the boat trailer. They intended to have a fishing trip all the way back to Tauranga.

Idee has a cellphone and after I dropped them off, he would ring me and let me know where they were.

The last time I heard from him was on the night of the 12th. He told me that they were at Whitianga and they were staying there the night and would be leaving in the morning.

He said that they would be fishing at odd spots out at the Alderman islands and then expected to be at Mayor Island that night.

I didn't hear from him last night as I had arranged with him. He hasn't rung this morning.

I am a bit worried because he told me that they had had some problems with the boat and had smelt a smell of burning plastic during the trip. They carried on because the smell went away so they thought it was okay. That had happened a couple of times, the last time not long before they had arrived at Whitianga.

Idee had told me that Harry had said it was okay because he had smelt it before and nothing happened.

When I last saw them they had a whole bag of clothes each.

Idee was wearing blue overalls and white fishing gumboots.

Harry was wearing a green jersey and black woollen trousers and also gumboots.

OIL SUCK - Alderman Islands

Marine SAREX 534 14/15th November BOAT details and equipment

8.5 meter Westcoaster.

Powered by a diesel inboard motor with sternleg.

Painted red hull, white top.

Older model Hull 1994

Re powered in 2001.

Marine radio. Unreliable

Epirb

Life jackets old red and yellow style

Marine SAREX (3) 14/15th November 2015

It is 1910 hrs 13th November 2015.

At 12.00 hrs on the 13th November 2015 vessel "Lady JaneZ" went to Tuhua reef off the South Eastern side of Mayor Island.

Their trip report indicated their ETR as 20.30 hrs.

There were two people on board and that they went to Tuhua reef to dive, Bill Smith and Harry Bloggs. Both are experienced divers and have been diving together for many years. They dive most weekends when the weather allows.

Bill Smith went for his dive first where he found a moderate number of Crayfish at 24 meters.

They alternated their diving so that there was somebody on deck at all times.

Harry followed Bills dive and said that he would also look at that same area.

On the completion of that dive Both Bill and Harry fished for 1 hour.

Bill then went for his second dive.

When Bill surfaced, Harry followed and also went for a dive.

At 1900 hrs Bill has called the coastguard by radio.

He reports that he can't find Harry. He said that after his dive he felt very tired and a bit sick. He said that he is a bit sore with aches around his shoulders. He said that he fell asleep while Harry was diving. He said he wasn't sure how long he had slept.

Coastguard records describe Lady JaneZ as a 7.5 meter, red, whitepointer owned by Bill Smith. Bill Smith lives on Maunganui Road, Mt Maunganui.

Since that message there has been no other contact.

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Marine SAREX (3) part 2

It is 20:30 hrs. 13th November.

A coastguard vessel has arrived at Tuhua reef. They have located Lady JaneZ at Tuhua reef. Bill is on board. He is semi conscious. He is incoherent.

A set of dive gear is on board.

There is no sign of Harry or a second dive set.

Marine SAREX (2) 14/15th November 2015

It is 2030 hrs on the 13th November 2013.

A woman, Mrs OLISH has reported her husband overdue from Pauanui.

Mrs OLISH lives on beach road, Pauanui. She lives there with her 2 children, aged 3 and 5. Her husband, Fo, works in Auckland and comes home for the weekend. They have been married 15 years.

On the 13th November He finished work early and arrived at home at 1500 hrs.

He decided to go for a fish on his Kayak.

He told Mrs OLISH that he intended to paddle to a fishing area off the Airstrip on Slipper island. He was expected back for a family dinner at 19.30 hrs.

He left at 1600 hrs.

Mr OLISH is a 35 year old man. He is fit and healthy.

He had only recently bought the kayak, having been out on a kayak before with his mates on several occasions. The Kayak is new. With it, in a package, came a fish finder, a battery anchor light, blue hutchwilco life jacket and a landing net. The kayak is yellow.

Mr OLISH carries his cellphone so that he can contact his wife if he needs to.

He was wearing a sun hat, sunglasses and took with him a black jacket to keep warm.

Marine SAREX(4) 14 Nov

It is 1800 hrs on the 13th November 2015.

“Shining Light” is a 6.5 meter Aluminium trailer boat, coloured blue. The vessel is owned by an avid trailer boat game fisher, Frank.

He has been reported overdue by Franks Wife.

The water temperature has been remarkable warm this year. Frank has decided to go wide to see if he can catch a tuna early in the year.

He told his wife that he was going to go out to the 400 meter mark at the back of Mayor island and will be trolling lures.

He couldn't find anybody else to go so he went by himself.

Frank is normally very safe around boats. He always wears his lifejacket, especially when he is by himself.

Frank completed a trip report at 0700 hrs saying that he intended to go out to the 400 meter mark behind Mayor island, and that his ETR is 1700 hrs.

There has been no contact with Harry all day.

Marine Sarex(4) part 2

Searches have advised locating a boat of similar description at position S37°16.9, E175°19.9.

There does not appear to be anybody in the boat.

MARINE SCENARIO

The Partner of a surfer arrived at the Police station at 8.00 a.m on the 6th December 2014. He said that his partner Harry SMITH had gone out for a surf at 5.00 a.m this morning for an early morning surf. He said he was going to surf on the Whangamata bar. It was low tide at 3.00 a.m.

He expected him back at home at 7.00 a.m to go to work at a café that they both run in Whiritoa

He has not returned home.

The informant went to the car park at Hunt Road and saw that Harry's car is still there.

The informant spoke to a couple of surfers who had just come from the water. They told him that they had seen another person in the water earlier on but that he had disappeared. They didn't think much of it, thinking that he had gone in.

Harry is a 63 year old man. He has a 7'6" surf board coloured white. He has a black spring suit.