

Wairarapa SAREX 2nd and 3rd of May 2015

Location: Totara Creek and High Ridge Tararua Forest Park

Evaluators Report:

The 2015 Wairarapa SAREX was a Functional Exercise.

Senior Constable Matheson prepared planning documents for the SAREX and they are attached as:

Appendix A: Masterton SAREX planning

Appendix B: Scenario for the incident Management team

Appendix C: Lost Party briefing papers

Appendix B: Initial team deployment taskings

Appendix D: SAREX expenses

The planning of the SAREX was a joint effort involving the Wairarapa SAR committee, senior SAR advisers and the officer in charge of the Wairarapa police SAR squad.

In the previous year Wairarapa Search and Rescue had purchased PLB tracking equipment. Operationally we had been tasked by the Rescue Coordination Centre for search events involving PLB activations. The use of Search Dogs during operations has also become more common and two search dogs were available for the SAREX.

Skills to be tested during the exercise

- Incident management team competency
- Correspondence relating to a search event
- Briefings and debriefings
- Tasking of teams
- Communications
- PLB ground tracking
- Dog tracking and working with search dogs
- First aid
- Navigation - on track and off track
- Helicopter safety and deployment
- Clue assessment
- Use of Radios

Other Desired Outcomes

- Introduction of the Health and Safety forms and procedures recently introduced by NZ LandSAR
- Expand the pool of prospective IMT members as part of succession planning.
- Increase the number of trained radio operators

It was decided that the initial deployment tasking's would be provided to the Incident Management Team along with the scenario. This was to ensure that initial deployment evolved quickly given that a weekend is a short period for an operational exercise.

The scenario was handed to the incident management team at 18:30hrs on Friday the 1st of May at the Wairarapa SAR base. The initial taskings for the search teams were also handed over. These related to deployment and not search activity. Formal search planning by the management team continued until about 2230hrs. They considered the search area, scenario analysis, risk management, segmentation and priorities.

The lost party group of 3 was deployed to Powell Hut at 1600hrs on Friday the 1st of May 2015 by Amalgamated Helicopters.

Saturday 02nd of May 2015

- Assembly at the SAR base took place at 0800hrs
- A formal briefing (included safety briefing) was conducted at 0830hrs
- This was followed by equipment issue and team leader briefings.
- The IMC team had prepared an Incident Action Plan.
- A document package was initiated - this included the missing persons report, search urgency form, job sheets, message forms, and team tasking forms - this document package grew throughout the SAREX to its conclusion including debrief. The package is consistent with current NZSAR forms with the exception of the combined Tasking and OSH tick box form.
- At about 0900hrs deployment of the search teams was initiated and all field members were given a helicopter safety briefing at Amalgamated helicopters.
- Four teams were deployed by helicopter.
- Tactics used by the IMT included containment, investigation of the lost parties vehicle, tracking by search dogs and tracking through the use of PLB tracking equipment.
- This resulted in the finding of two of the lost parties by 1730hrs on the Saturday.
- Two first aid scenarios were dealt with including a minor sprain and a gunshot wound to the jaw.
- A paramedic was on hand at the SAR base to evaluate the first aid that was given in the gunshot scenario.
- The gunshot scenario was also identified and protected as a crime scene.
- Interviews of the missing persons were conducted
- The SAREX was shut down at about 1800hrs and a radio debrief of the days activities was conducted.

Sunday 03rd of May 2015

- A 0700hrs radio briefing was conducted
- A fresh Incident Action Plan was generated
- Analysis of the interview information had been completed
- Fresh taskings were generated as a result of the interview information
- The last of the missing persons broke through confinement and walked out to the road end.
- Teams were tasked to cease search activity and start walking out at 09:30hrs
- Police dog Thames went missing at 1000hrs resulting in a move to operational activity by some of the teams.

Hot Debriefing:

- Teams that returned from the field that night were debriefed
- Teams that remained in the field to look for Thames were debriefed when they returned from the field on Monday.

Post Event Debriefing:

- The SAREX has been discussed at committee level during the AGM on 21 May 2015

Lesions Learnt:

Teams reported that they had difficulty in tracking the PLB with the equipment when they got close to the grid reference that was given to them by RCC. They found themselves going round in circles and eventually gave up on the tracking gear and relied on the search dog and checked out decision points instead. At this point the lost party who had a training beacon was in heavy forest and only about 100 metres from the search team.

- It is suggested that more training with the PLB tracking gear be conducted in areas of heavy forest and broken ground.


The land SAR search dog and Police search dog were not compatible

- It is suggested that two land SAR search dogs can work in conjunction with each other - but police search dogs have an aggressiveness that suggests they should work independently of other dogs.

The disappearance of operational Police dog Thames during the SAREX.

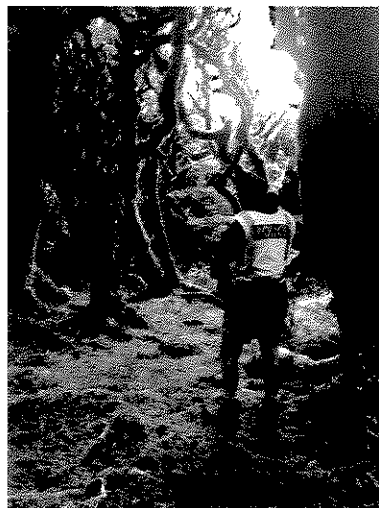
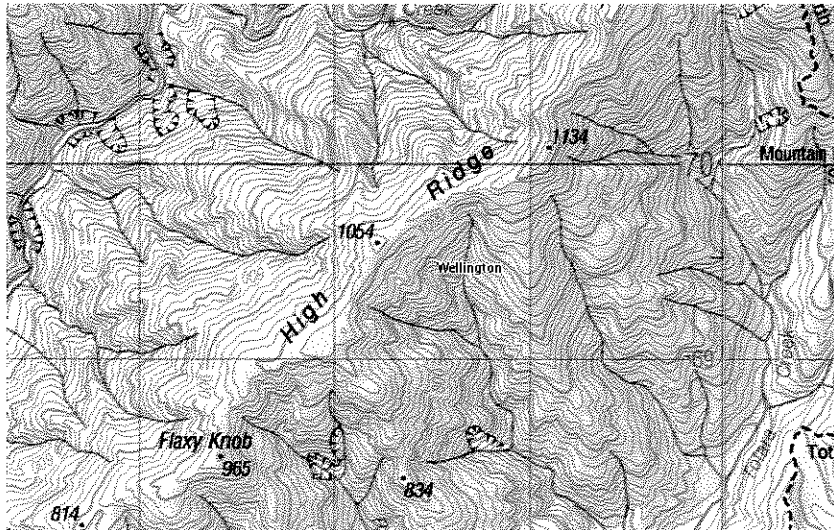
- Police will review the circumstances and consider tracking equipment for their dogs.

Conclusion: The skills tested during the SAREX were relevant to an operational deployment. The forms and documents produced were consistent with flow diagram chart that NZSAR have provided as a guide. The only cost by Police sought as reimbursement is 1 hour's helicopter time. This was used in the deployment phase ([REDACTED]). A total of 14 people and 2 dogs were transported by helicopter. Twenty five people received a helicopter safety briefing.



M. JOHNSTON
Chairman and Adviser
Wairarapa Search and Rescue
25 January 15

Wairarapa Sarex 2015



Appendix's

APPENDIX A: Masterton SAREX 2015: **High Ridge Tararua Forest Park** **02 and 03 May 2015**

Lost Party:

- Consists of a group of three:
John Stag 17 yrs, Peter Boar 19 years, Paul Moose 22 yrs
- Inexperienced hunting party
- They have one set of maps between them Featherston BP33
Masterton BP34 map
- No GPS or communication devices
- Paul Moose has a PLB

Gear list and descriptions:

- To be advised - a real list and consistent with lost party: Refer SAR07 reports that will be prepared

Lost Party Deployment:

- Late Afternoon Friday 01 May 2015 (actual rather than scenario)
- Walking - or flown in if air support approved
- Separate tasking's to each member of the lost party
- Requirements: Three ration packs, 3 x VHF (encrypted), 1 x HF , a communications plan, individual scenario tasking sheets Featherston BP33 Masterton BP34 map First aid kit, clues, PLBs x 3, PLB transmitter, 1 firearm
- Water considerations
- Lost party to be managed by Matheson/Paget

Lost Party Tasking Sheets

- To be prepared - Matheson

Lost Party Intentions

- The three will have left their vehicle at Mt Holdsworth at about 8am on Friday the 1st of May 2015.
- They walk to High Ridge via Powell Hut.
- They will leave some clues along the way. (Lost party tasking)
- They will come to SAR attention via PLB activation.
- RCC will refer the case to Police as the exercise will not allow tracking of the PLB by helicopter
- They are inexperienced but have good gear and are fit with no medical conditions.

Lost Party Vehicle:

- Will be parked at the Holdsworth car park
- Keys available as part of scenario Matheson
- Clues: to be pre planned and placed as per tasking to the lost party

Communications

- Lost party communications plan to be prepared - encrypted VHF communication AREC/Matheson
- Holdsworth repeater for search teams

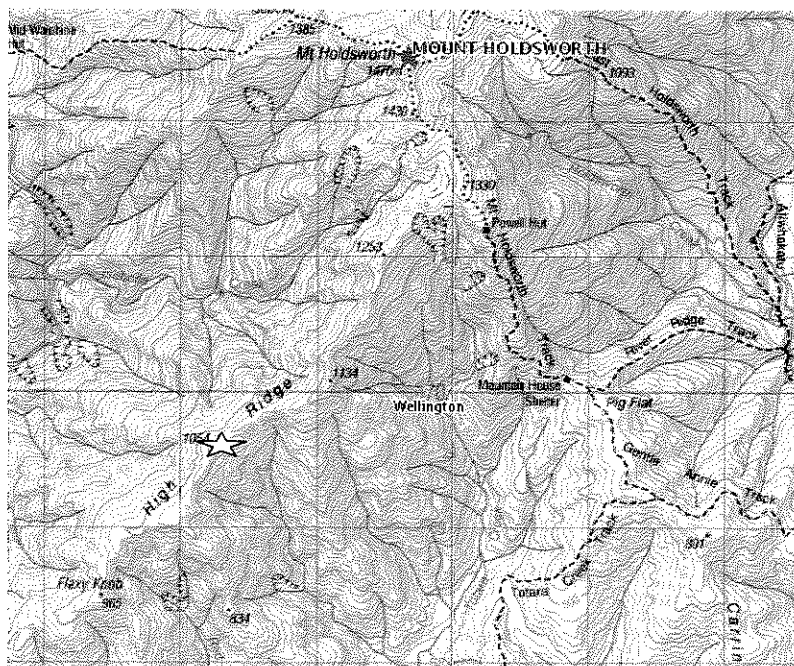
Scenario for the Incident Management team:

At 2230hrs on Friday the 1st of May 2015 the Rescue Coordination Centre has been notified of PLB activation on High Ridge at GR 022 695 below high point 1054.

The PLB is registered to Paul Moose and inquiries have been made with his parents. He is with John Stag 17 years and Peter Boar aged 19 years. Paul Moose is carrying a rifle. They have little hunting experience - only a few day trips in the Rimutaka and Haurangi Forest Parks. This is their first trip in the Tararuas

The three have left a vehicle at Holdsworth Rd end at about 8am on Friday the 1st of May. They were due out on Sunday - they are equipped for camping overnight and were intending to hunt the High Ridge area - and stay at Totara Flats on Saturday night.

Helicopter tracking of the PLB is not possible and the matter has been referred to Wairarapa Search and rescue for investigation.



Timings

Management group to meet at the SAR Base Hood Aerodrome 1830hrs
Friday the 1st of May for handover of the scenario

Assembly: at Masterton SAR base 0800-0830hrs on Saturday 02 May.

This will be followed by a briefing and equipment issuing.

It is suggested that teams are deployed at 1000hrs

No search activity after 16.30hrs on Saturday 02 May

Shutdown of the field phase for the SAREX at 11.30hrs on Sunday 03 May
followed by evacuation to Holdsworth or the SAR base

SAREX debrief at the SAR base.

Initial taskings for the search teams will be prepared in advance:

- Suggestions for taskings as follows

Team lost Party: Take priority - deployed as per tasking by Matheson/Paget

Team 1

Consisting: of Search Dog - PLB tracking gear - and a search team

Deployed: by Helicopter to Powell Hut

Team 2

Standard SAR team and a search dog

Deployed: by Helicopter to Powell Hut

Team 3

Consisting: Standard SAR team

Deployed: by Helicopter to Totara Flats Hut

Team 4

Standard SAR team:

Deployed: by Helicopter to Totara Flats Hut

Team 5

Standard SAR team:

Deployed: to Holdsworth Rd End

Incident Control Point

- SAR base - Hood Aerodrome

Flying Options:

Dependant on funding or an undertaking by the air force to attend the SAREX

Amalgamated: From their base at Chester Rd - or the landing site at Holdsworth lodge - Amalgamated will only be used in the deployment phase if funding is approved.

Skills to be tested during the exercise

- Incident management team competency
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MATHESON PAGET and JOHNSTON

A.G.MATHESON
Senior Constable
Masterton 3



APPENDIX B

Scenario for the Incident Management team:

At 2230hrs on Friday the 1st of May 2015 the Rescue Coordination Centre has been notified of PLB activation on High Ridge at GR 022 695 near high point 1054.

The PLB is registered to Paul Moose aged 22 years and inquires have been made with his Wellington parents. He is with John Stag 17 years and Peter Boar aged 19 years. Paul Moose is carrying a .270 rifle. They have very little hunting experience other than a few day trips in the Rimutaka and Haurangi Forest Parks. This is their first trip in the Tararuas. They don't have cell phones or a communications device. They said they would set the beacon off if they got into trouble

The three have left a vehicle at Holdsworth Rd end at about 8am on Friday the 1st of May.

The vehicle is a white ford Courier and DOC have confirmed its presence at Holdsworth Rd end. Police have a key for the vehicle.

They were due out on Sunday the 3rd of May at Holdsworth. They are equipped for camping overnight and were intending to hunt the High Ridge area - and stay at Totara Flats on Saturday night.

Westpac have twice tried to fly to the location of the beacon but low cloud has prevented them from accessing the area.

Weather: Low cloud is expected to remain a problem throughout the weekend. It may be possible to dispatch teams to Totara Flats and Powell Hut

RCC have handed responsibility to Police and Wairarapa Search and Rescue as a Cat 1 search.

Attached are:

- SAR Form Missing Person Summary x three
- Photographs x 3

**Masterton SAREX 2015 Scenario draft:
High Ridge Tararua Forest Park
02 and 03 May 2015**

APPENDIX C

Roles:

John STAG - Paul BASHFORD

Peter BOAR - Barry PAGET - Lost part team leader

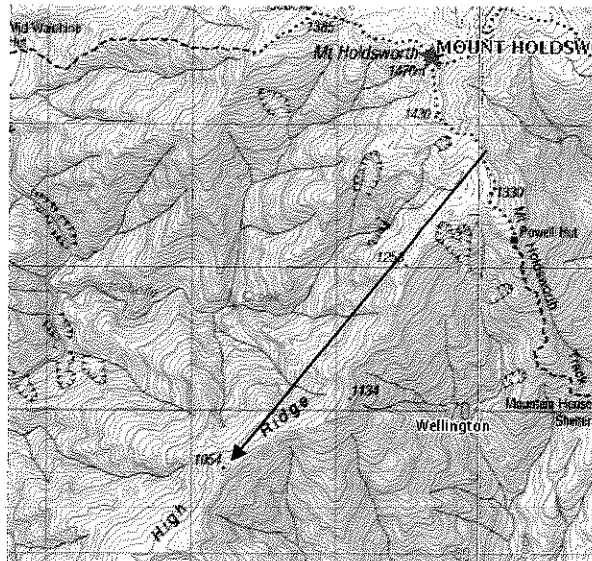
Paul MOOSE - Hayden ROBINSON

Initial Deployment:

- Scenario requires that a vehicle be left at the Holdsworth car park (my ute Ford Courier [REDACTED])
- The only clues in the vehicle will be a muslie bar box (supplied) and an infringement notice for speeding and carrying a loaded firearm in a motor vehicle
- You guys will have the muslie bars
- The scenario requires a log book entry at Holdsworth lodge :
"01/May/15 Stag/Boar/Moose heading up to Powell - then hunting High Ridge - out on Sunday" (I can arrange this)
- There will be no logbook entry at Powell
- You guys will be flown to the Powell late Friday afternoon.
- Make an early start Saturday morning (7.30 -8am) and walk to the old High Ridge track

First Clue Deployment

- Leave a wrapper just inside the bush edge at the start of the old High Ridge track

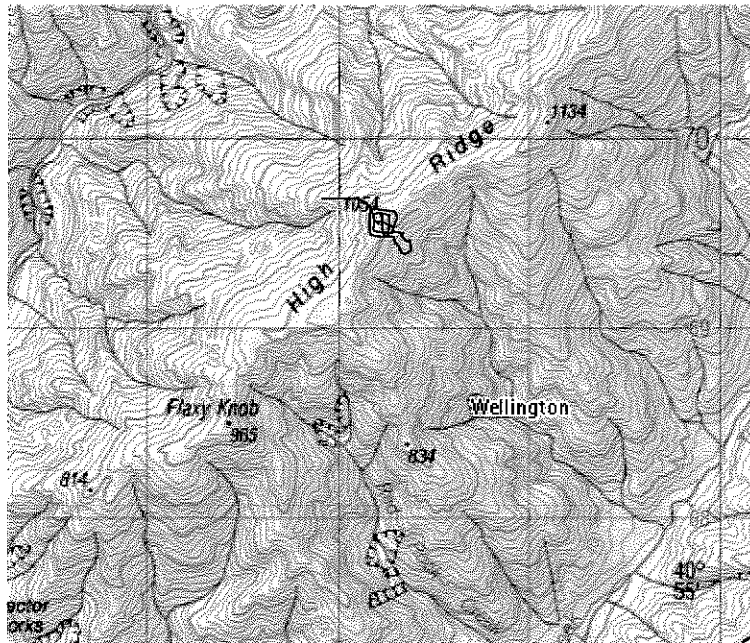


Saturday Morning:

- Proceed as a group to high point 1054 where you will separate.

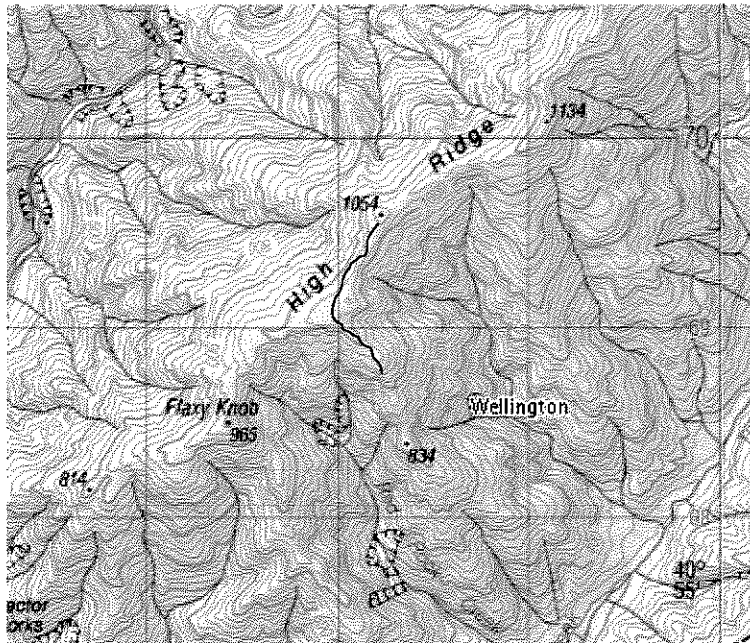
Tasking: John STAG PAUL

- The scenario is that at about 4.00pm the Friday while walking down High Ridge the group heard a stag roar.
- Peter Boar and Paul Moose have left John Stag on High Ridge near 1054 telling you to wait for them. They didn't want you to come with them because you are too noisy and clumsy. You have the maps and PLB with you. They said they will come back for you
- You have waited and just before dark you heard a shot. This happened about an hour after they left you on the ridge and you think the shot came from the Totara Creek side of High Ridge that it came from.
- You have camped for the night near 1054.
- They didn't come back that night as arranged and you set the PLB off at about 11pm on the Friday night
- On the Saturday morning you have gone to look for them.
- You are to do some circuits round Highpoint 1054
- You are to drop 150m or so down on the Totara Creek side then climbed back up to 1054 - don't come back up the same way.
- Do some circles crossing your tracks once you get back up on top.
- Then drop 150m or so down on the Waiohine side - find a flat spot
- This will be where you will twist your ankle and await rescue which will hopefully take place on the Saturday. Make sure you have your gear with you as it may take a while for them to find you.
- Ensure the training PLB beacon is activated.
- Once you have been found treated etc - that part of the scenario will be closed and you are to stay with the search team that has found you.



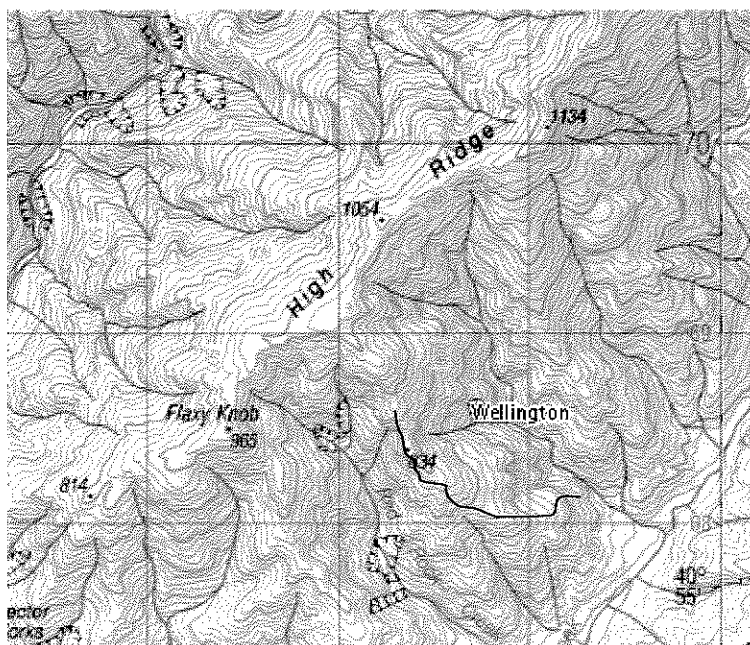
Tasking Peter BOAR and Paul MOOSE: BARRY and HAYDEN

- After separating from STAG at the campsite - carry on down High Ridge south of High Point 1054 to E:019 N:691
- Travel down the ridge leading towards Totara Creek grid reference E: 022 N:685
- CLUE: Leave a muesli wrapper on the ridge just after you leave High Ridge itself.
- The previous evening you and MOOSE will have stalked down to a stag that was roaring near E:022 N:685
- Due to an accidental discharge - MOOSE has shot you in the face breaking your jaw. You were standing behind him and he was carrying the gun slung over his shoulder
- We will have some makeup and bandages for you
- Create a mini crime scene with some fake blood and a cartridge case
- You cant talk (but can write if asked to)
- You can't respond to searchers calling out etc.
- Set yourself up in your sleeping bag etc and wait to be found.
- Communicate to the search team through writing when asked.
- That Moose panicked after shooting you.
- He couldn't find his PLB in his pack and had forgotten giving it to STAG earlier
- That he put you into your bag bandaged you and took off down the ridge to walk out to get help
- That it was nearly dark and he didn't have a torch
- Once you have been found treated etc - that part of the scenario will be closed and you are to stay with the search team that has found you.



Tasking for Paul MOOSE: HAYDEN

- Having shot your mate and got him comfortable
- Carry on down the ridge to 834 and beyond towards Totara Creek
- Find a spot down low down and camp out for Saturday night.
- The exercise will shut down at 16:30hrs
- For the scenario you have taken a fall and have a sore neck but are still mobile just slow
- On Sunday morning get up early and walk up Totara Creek and walk out to Holdsworth via the old track



Communications

- You will each have an encrypted VHF on the Holdsworth Channel
- Schedules on the hour during the operational day until shutdown and at 7am each morning
- Call signs will be surnames STAG BOAR MOOSE
- I will be MONACH OF THE GLEN
- You will have cell phone coverage on High Ridge
- My cell phone is [REDACTED]

Tony Matheson

APPENDIX D

SAREX EXPENCES

Amalgamated Helicopters:

Lost party to Powell hut on 01 May 2014

Two search teams to Powell hut on 02 May 2015

Two search teams to Totara Flats on 02 May 2015

Helicopter safety briefing on 02 May 2015

Total of 1 hours flying

- [REDACTED]

