



Northland Search and Rescue

SUBJECT: Northland SAREX September 2016

TEXT: REPORT FOR NZSAR

This report is in relation to the Northland Land SAREX held at Te Ngaer Bay area 16-18th September 2016.

The purpose of the SAREX was to identify a number of training objectives, develop IMT skills and evaluate best practice in accordance with the NZ LandSAR guidelines.

The SAREX was conducted over Saturday and Sunday 17-18th September 2016, with the exercise being based from Matauri Bay, Northland.

Objectives:

To give LandSAR and Police inexperienced members time in the IMT to gain an appreciation and skills for future operations.

To assess field teams listening to tasks and reacting when required.

Improve radio communication while in the field.

To enhance the inter-group operating capabilities of LandSAR groups in the Northland District and to promote leadership within SAR teams.

Exercise type:

The SAREX was designed in 2 phases. The first was the scenario exercise. The second was the skills based training on day 2.

LandSAR groups from Whangarei and Far North participated with the Northland Police SAR squad. It was co-ordinated by LandSAR Far north and Police.

Members of both Far North LandSAR and Police made up the IMT and comms.

A combination of NZSAR and both Whangarei and Far North LandSAR members ran the skills on day 2.

Exercise Monitoring

The exercise was monitored by Ian RUDDELL and myself, regularly discussing the progress of the exercise. Reports are attached.

A hot debrief was conducted immediately after the exercise.

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Feedback was sought by members attending the skills session on day 2 as to relevance and interest.

For your information

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DEBRIEF OF NORTHLAND SAREX

SEPTEMBER 2016.

All the comments below were discussed in both the debrief with the group and again separately with the IMT

IMT Planning:

I took into account the fact that all 4 have had very little or no time in an IMT previously. They received the initial scenario well and discussed it well. It took them a while to seek out further relevant information. At one time they focussed on drift patterns and where someone could be not even knowing if anyone was still in the water. Again it took some time to find out or even seek how many were actually on the boat. However once the information was obtained they flowed very well and there seemed to be a nice structure to the way they were thinking and what their tasks were. Very good use of technology maps, setting tasks, LKP etc. They could have used the local knowledge more than they did. In the 4 hours they managed to get all the information and set the first task for all 9 teams so that when it kicked off in the morning they were ready. Setting the tasks did take time as they were doing it all on the computer and hand writing. They started to work well in pairs, a pair doing tasking each which started to reduce the time. An IAP was filled in on the night and set in line with the goals. What they could have done was task people to get some things ready for the following day, team kits, SAR Track etc. At times XXX from IMT had too much going on and wasn't really delegating.

Exercise

The briefing to all teams was held on time and was structured well (GSMEAC). They did ask if there were any questions. Team leaders were initially briefed well and set off for their tasks. Again good use of technology however when the computers went down there was a lot of worrying about it rather than actually the scenario that was still going. It took a little time to put things in place eg. runner etc. and carry on. In real life it happens and you need to adjust and carry on. Listening to teams as what they had was good. The rib team said very rough and they were coming in and there was no opposition the first comment was let's re-task that group. There was calmness in the IMT and never once did I see any panic or indecision. They were looking ahead at what is to be done trying to stay ahead of the game. When clues came in good analysis and reaction. A clue came in so they re-tasked and put tasks waiting to the back of the queue making good judgements on what was and what was not a priority.

A hot debrief was held when everyone had returned. Points noted by teams were:

Occasionally wrong G.R's given

Sometimes a long wait (on standby) for responses after giving a clue.

Maps not laminated and it was wet.

Not having full TOPO maps only a local map which did not have grids on it

Some of the wording of the tasks were not clear.

Dogs were put in after the area contaminated and not first.

Teams were crossing over each other

Overall I was impressed with the way that the IMT carried themselves and the decisions made, despite the lack of experience. The plan flowed and they got

results because they had teams in the right places with the information they had received.

Skills Based Training:

The 3 skills chosen were Tracking, Navigation and Introduction to Ropes.

Tracking: After a presentation the group left Matauri Bay Campground and left for another location. It was good to put practical into play immediately following theory. Obviously it is an ongoing skills that needs to be practised but the interest was extremely high from those that attended to want to develop the skill. As a very basic introduction I thought it was well presented and hit the mark.

Navigation: I did not attend this but the feedback I have heard is good. They were happy it was compass and map work, going back to basics a bit and not necessarily relying on GPS's. It refreshed there basic skills.

Ropes: For the first hour it was a little complicated and a bit of watch and see how it was done. It seemed these may have been basic set ups but obviously took some time to be familiar with it all. The second hour was much better. It relied on hands on setting up your own harness with a strap and then introducing safety lines and when and where they could be used. This was set at the right level. It would have been better to start with this and progress. Even basic ropes is a complicated topic and not enough time was spent on it. As an in depth and tricky subject especially when you have big safety concerns in the real life scenario maybe more time of safety ropes and practical use of it in a terrain suitable would have been more suitable. However all attendees were always focused and listening.

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