

# Exercise Evaluation Report

## Exercise 'DELAYED'

**Location:** Wellington

**Date:** 9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> November 2018

**Report version:** Final

**Evaluator(s):** *Brett Main (NZ Police)*

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## **Executive Summary**

This SAREX was planned as a multi-agency operation to exercise coordination between those groups within the Wellington District. It was planned as a Category 2 search which progressed to a Category 1 search.

Exercise DELAYED was a land based scenario involving an overdue aircraft with injured persons at the crash and missing persons from the crash scene.

The exercise gave many variables for the IMT to consider and plan for. Resulting in the aircraft being located, injured persons being treated on scene and evacuated and a missing persons search being conducted with both missing persons being located by search teams.

The poor weather on the Friday evening meant the task planned was unable to be completed by Helicopter to deploy a team and a radio repeater.

Overall the aim of the exercise was achieved.

# 1. Recommendations

These recommendations are derived from my findings detailed further in this report.

- RCCNZ requires that all paperwork for an official handover from a Category 2 to Category 1 search needs to be signed and returned to them. Not a major issue for a SAREX but would be required for an operational search.
- RCCNZ would like a courtesy call update after an official handover to Cat 1 to keep them updated on the search and or result of the search.
- Further IMT training to develop skills for less experienced members of the IMT group. Some new personnel felt out of depth at times.
- Ensure each phase of the search has the time frames on the IAP so anyone who reads the IAP is aware of which search phase it relates to.
- Keep a track of teams that are not yet deployed wasting time waiting.
- An updated area readiness plan needs to be completed. The last one was updated in June 2015.
- Use the readiness plan as a planning tool and guide as it held communications planning details that were overlooked in the early stages.
- Ensure IMT position bibs are worn early in the operation.
- Have teams listed at the Staging Area on the T-Cards to assist with personnel knowing which team they are in and who is on their team.
- Ensure Land SAR training days include training on the competencies that are required to be completed and how to keep records of achievement and who can assess the competencies as completed.
- Competencies records book/folder should be issued to each Land SAR member to be either held personally or with the training officer for completion and record achievements.

## 2. Introduction

This SAREX was planned as a multi-agency operation to exercise coordination between those groups within the Wellington District. It was planned as a Category 2 search with initial information coming from RCCNZ.

The main objectives of the exercise were:

To practically exercise SAR related agencies with the Wellington District.

To practically exercise an interagency IMT.

To provide an opportunity for Land SAR competency assessment.

In the planning phase of the SAREX poor weather was part of the initial scenario. This played out well on the Friday evening with the weather being similar to the scenario, as a result some tasks were not completed as planned.

The planning team provided injects at relevant times to progress the SAREX planning and response from the IMT. The planning team had built a “planning background story” with a timeline and briefing to assist in this process.

## 3. Background

### 3.1 Background to the Exercise

This SAREX conducted in the Wellington District was hosted by Wellington as it is shared between Wellington and Wairarapa on alternating years.

Category II SAROP's occasionally occur within the Wellington District. This SAREX was to involve multiple agencies in the IMT to liaison with the Coordinating Authority and deploy field teams.

### 3.2 Dates, location, organising agency(s), key people

At 1435 hrs on Friday the 9<sup>th</sup> of November 2018 the Police SAR squad was assembled at the ICP Lower Hutt Police Station, where an initial event chronology was handed to the on call Police member which had been received from RCCNZ.

Further information was passed including a RCCNZ IAP and the area Readiness Plan (Pre Plan). A plan was developed with a Police SAR briefing at 1650 hrs.

This led to a full IMT developing a plan for deploying field assets within the Remutaka Forest Park.

RCCNZ were initially the lead agency until the overdue helicopter was located then the search was formally handed to NZ Police as a Category 1 search for missing persons.

The SAREX was organised by:

Sgt Anthony Harmer Police SAR Coordinator

Jeremy Patterson LSAR, Wellington

Rochelle Andrews Police SAR

Meg Shaw LSAR, Wellington

### 3.3 Participating organisations

Rescue Coordination Centre NZ

NZ Police, Wellington District SAR

Land SAR, Wellington

Land SAR, Wairarapa

Wellington Amateur Radio Emergency Communications (AREC)

Rural Fire, Hutt Valley

Garden City Helicopters

Amalgamated Helicopters (JD)

Wellington Free Ambulance

Victoria University Emergency Group

Rapid Relief Team

### 3.4 Exercise aim

To practically exercise SAR related agencies within Wellington District.

### 3.5 Exercise objectives

- To practically exercise SAR related agencies within Wellington District.
- To practically exercise an interagency Incident management Team.
- To provide an opportunity for Land SAR competency assessments.

### 3.6 Exercise Scenario

At 1230hrs on Friday the 9<sup>th</sup> November 2018 a Private helicopter flight, ZK ABC with 4 POB leaves Wellington Airport with the intention of transiting to Hood Aerodrome, Masterton. At 1330hrs the flight is reported overdue to RCCNZ by Air Traffic control.

RCCNZ report that the last Radar position that they had for ZK ABC was 41 25.02S 174 54.08E near the mouth of the Orongorongo River mouth, heading north. RCCNZ Request that Police take over the search and act as the On Scene coordinator for RCCNZ. At 1415hrs Police Central Communications notify the SAR duty officer.

At 1613hrs 09/11/2018, RCCNZ receive one errant 'ping' from an ELT with a position given as 41 22 06S 174 56 26E They are not convinced as to the veracity or position of the 'ping' as it transmitted for such a short time and has not been repeated. They have accessed the records for the Helicopters tracking system and the last update was at 1240 hrs the position was 41 23 39S 174 55 20E.

River levels in the valley are as they are on the date but cloud cover prevents an aerial search of the Orongorongo Valley. This information is passed to the Wellington Police SAR Duty Officer.

Advice from a local helicopter operator (JD) reports that there may be a window in the cloud to support the placement of a repeater and one search team if required. Poor weather on the actual day of the SAREX did not allow this to happen on the Friday evening.

#### The Crash

Low altitude hard landing in the Orongorongo Valley as the pilot had intended to show the occupants the valley when they were caught in white out conditions. The pilot tried to re-orientate by going to a lower altitude and using the Valley as a natural guide. All four POB survive the crash. Two are moderately to seriously injured and stay with the machine. The other two are moderately concussed with associated confusion but team up to go for help. No orientation aids or equipment taken.

## 4. Evaluation Methodology

### 4.1 The agreed outcomes of the evaluation activity

The evaluator was asked at short notice to participate as an evaluator but was involved in the initial planning stages. The evaluator was asked to observe and report on the SAREX objectives.

### 4.2 Evaluation scope

During observation of the SAREX the Objectives and Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) were used to establish if the Objectives were being achieved. That included multiple agencies, multi group coordination.

### 4.3 Aspects of the exercise observed, what was not observed

I was able to observe the ICP and IMT at Lower Hutt Police Station. I was able to attend briefings at the ICP and staging area at Remutaka Forest Park including the Helicopter briefing. I was able to interact with field teams at the staging area prior to being deployed and on extraction from the field. I was able to photograph documents, logging and whiteboards used. Interviews and conversations were taken in notes at the time.

I was not able to observe teams in the field.

### 4.4 The process followed in preparing and submitting the report

I was initially involved with the SAREX planning but due to a family matter was unable to continue with the planning of preparing competency assessments. I was asked at short notice to be an evaluator due to the unavailability of the original. The objectives and KPI's had already been set.

The report was submitted in draft for comment from the Police SAR Coordinator and organising committee. The final version contains what the evaluator and Police SAR Coordinator consider appropriate.

### 4.5 Other information

The poor weather on Friday did not allow the exercise to play out as planned with the early deployment of a repeater and field team by helicopter.



## 5. Findings

**Objective: To practically exercise SAR related agencies within Wellington District.**

**KPI:** Multiple agencies and groups involved in SAREX activities in the field.

This was easily met with a large number of groups and agencies in the field. These included NZ Police SAR, Land SAR from Wellington and Wairarapa, Wellington Free Ambulance, Garden City Helicopters and catering services from Rapid Relief Team at the staging area.

There was good use of Police and Rural Fire resources (Mobile Police Base and Rural Fire mobile command vehicle) at the Staging area making communications and deploying teams easier and efficient.

Positive comments were made from Wellington Free Ambulance "Definitely worth attending. The more we can all get used to working together the better."

**KPI:** Working liaison between all agencies involved.

This was also met. There was good communication between the organising group and other agencies during planning where timings and appropriate responses were asked for. All agencies arrived at designated times showing they knew what to do and where to be. Also during the SAREX there was discussion between the agencies involved from the IMT, planning group and other agencies to get tasks completed.

Field teams were arranged so multiple agencies were in each team.

RCC reported that the IMT keep them updated regularly with phone calls and email during the Cat 2 part of the SAREX. RCC said that the Police SAR response was only a small part of a larger search effort by RCC and enquires made by the IMT to contact next of kin was part of the RCC role. That the official hand over from cat 2 to cat 1 did not fully comply with the required paperwork, it was not signed and returned to RCC. They did however mention that a request for a subject matter expert from IMT on the type of helicopter missing and its flight path were a good approach to the scenario. That there had not been any updates since the official hand over as a courtesy.

**Objective: To practically exercise an interagency IMT.**

**KPI:** Multiple agencies and groups coordinating activities in the field from IMT.

The IMT was made up of several groups including Police, Land SAR, AREC, RCCNZ and Victoria University Response Team.

A mix of groups was used in the IMT positions with those having less experience given opportunities to develop further. At times some of the new IMT members felt out of depth and experience.

With the university team having no real experience in a SAR situation but having CIMS training they were initially only in an observing role however were able to be mentored into positions alongside others making a valued contribution.

T-cards were used for all SAREX members but teams deployed were not put into their teams on the T-card bib until it was mentioned to the Staging Area Manager.

GSMEAC briefing format was used in the IMT at operational period change overs and for the initial briefing at the Staging area on the Saturday morning. A comprehensive safety plan was developed for the SAREX.

IMT were able to communicate with field teams and with the staging area with radio and IPStar.

**KPI:** Well-functioning IMT with a clear goal, objectives, strategies and assignments.

From the early stages in the SAREX the IMT were able to set goals and objectives for the operational periods, building on the strategies to achieve the objectives and tasking the assignments. This could be seen through the building of an IAP, information collection plan and the Operations Manager being able to develop tasks from the IAP. Updated Phase time periods on the IAP were not completed at each handover period.

IMT roles were set by the I/C and the roles within the CIMS structure were adhered to. It did take about an hour for the IMT to wear their position bibs helping to identify who was in which position.

Unfortunately after the helicopter briefing which was scheduled for 0900, it was expected that all teams were to be deployed by Helicopter. Two teams were still not deployed into the field by 1420 hrs.

After the missing Helicopter was located the IMT had to change their IAP from missing aircraft to missing persons and injured parties. This seemed to account for the time delay in the teams that were delayed being deployed.

Of note was the fact the I/C was new to the position but she was able to be planning ahead with the next operational periods. On the Friday evening there was a plan for the next two operational periods on Saturday with personnel assigned to roles within the IMT for first thing in the morning and later on Saturday. The theme of this forward planning continued into the Sunday IMT.

It took some time for a communications plan to be developed even with the IMT having access to the Readiness Plan on Friday evening.

GPS downloads were made when teams exited at the end of the SAREX. This would have helped with planning if a search was to continue.

**KPI:** Use of IMT meetings to achieve and progress the IAP.

I observed several meetings with the IMT where regular updates were made from within each of the positions reporting on progress and identifying new objectives when others had been completed. The IAP was updated at each operational period and when there was a significant change in the direction of the SAREX for example when the Helicopter was located or for a demobilization plan to be created. IMT meetings were planned and added to the IAP.

**Objective: To provide an opportunity for LSAR competency assessments.**

**KPI:** All field and IMT members are provided with the opportunity to demonstrate competence within their skill level or higher.

At the Saturday briefing for all teams the SAREX coordinator briefed that he was available to sign off Land SAR competencies at the conclusion of the weekend or for a note to be taken by their team leader of what competencies had been achieved and to have them signed at a later time. This was again brought up at the hot debrief at the completion of the SAREX.

Probationary members were placed into teams with more experienced members allowing them to be assessed. New members in the IMT were mentored into their roles by experienced members and an overall IMT mentor was at the ICP.

In the initial planning I was looking at which competencies were available to be completed but was unable to complete this planning due to other family commitments. I interviewed one team on completion of the SAREX. They did not have any competencies books available to them and were unaware of what was able to be signed off. They were aware of the briefing but not exactly sure what was required from them.

## 6. Conclusions

This SAREX was well planned and mostly met the objectives set for this exercise. An opportunity was given for competency assessment and was met in that aspect but members did not seem to be aware of what was required or how to complete the assessments.

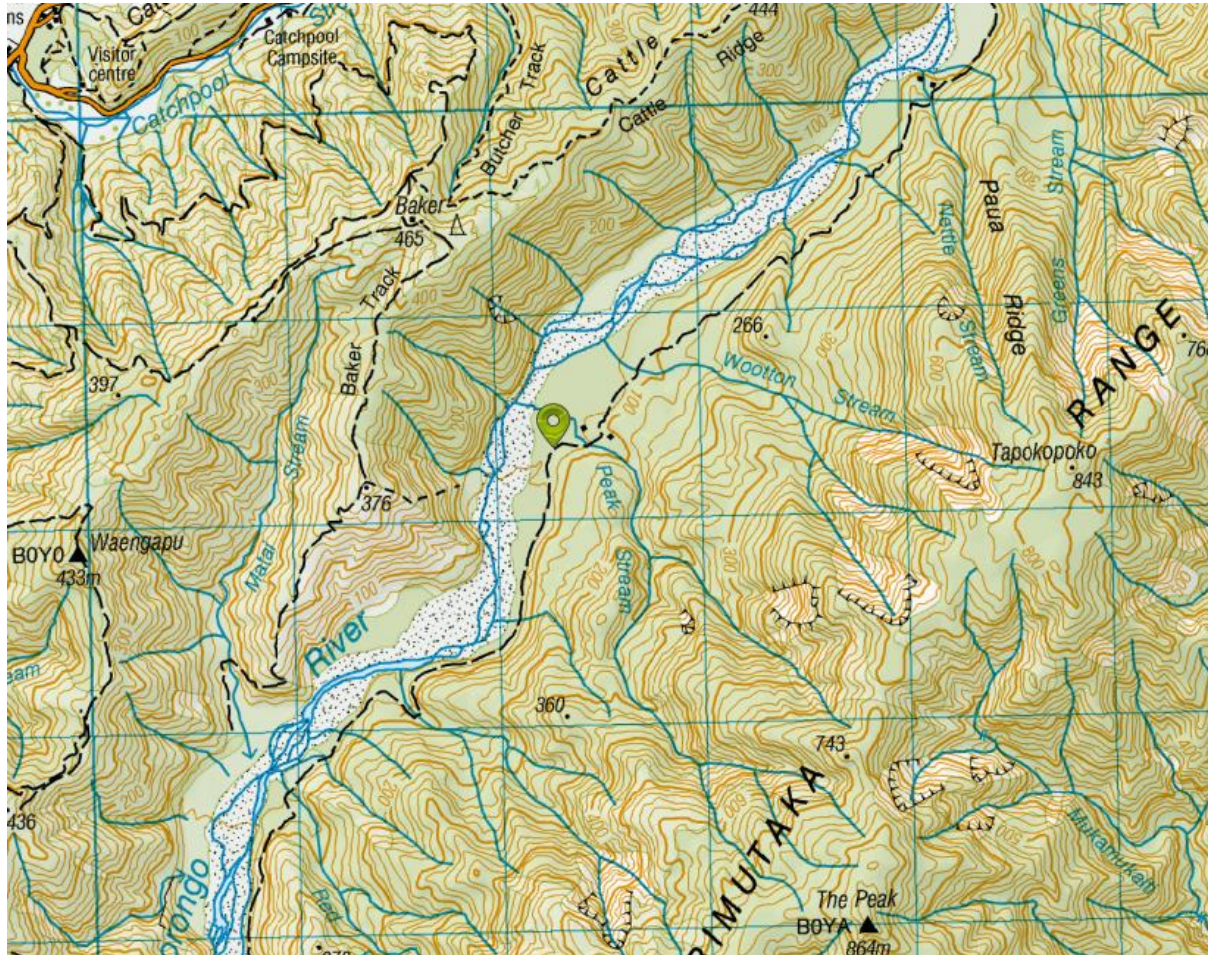
There were some delays in teams being deployed but this was found to be because of a complete change in direction of the search after location of the overdue aircraft to a missing persons search.

The SAREX has given the opportunity to develop relationships between groups that were non-existent before and strengthen others that had become unfamiliar or without regular contact.

Overall the aim of the SAREX to practically exercise SAR related agencies in the Wellington District was met.

## 7. Appendix

Area of SAREX. Indication of LKP for helicopter.





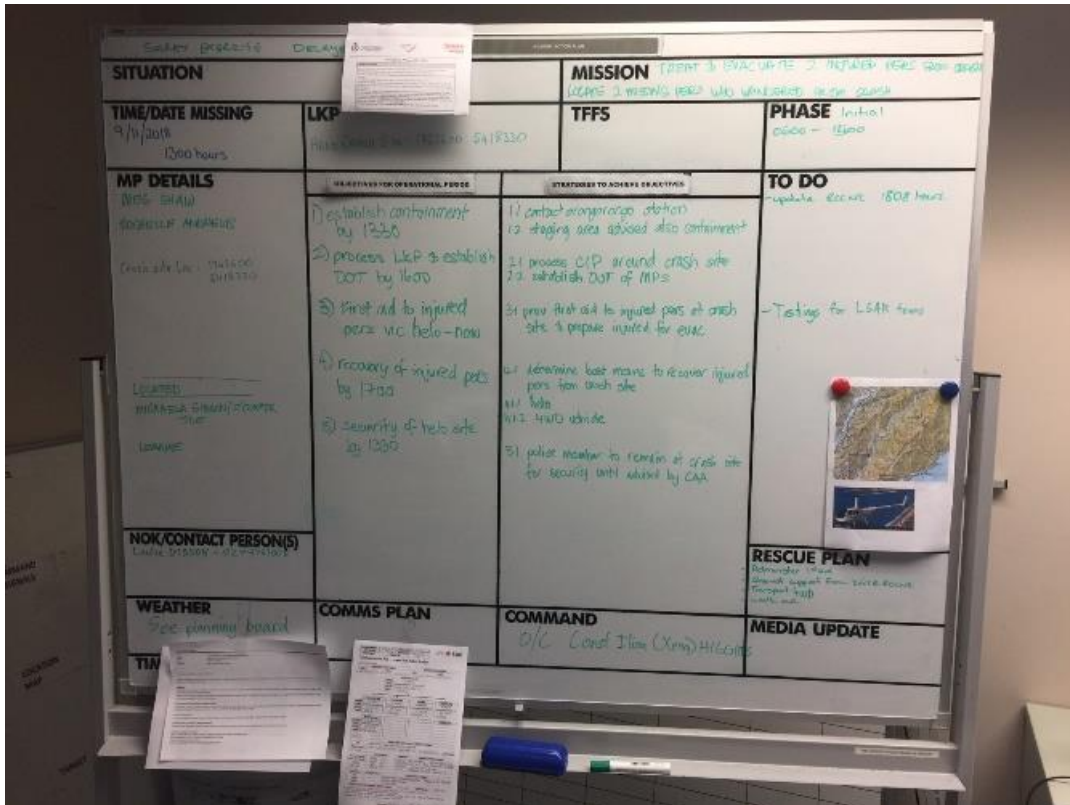
Whiteboard IAP's

*Safety Exercise DELAYED*

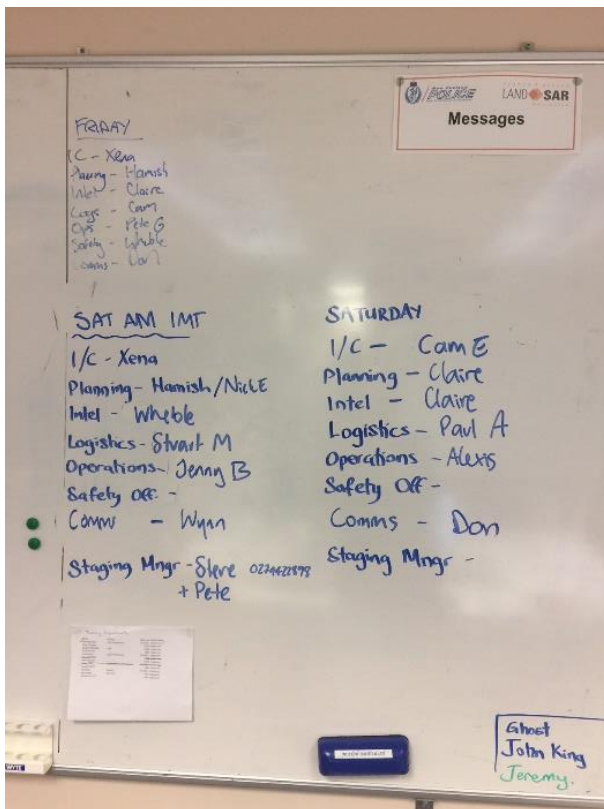
<b>SITUATION</b> Helicopter in 4 POB overdue WILCO 24000 R/L ZK-ABC		<b>MISSION</b> Safely locate helicopter and 4 POB.	
<b>TIME/DATE MISSING</b> 9/11/2018 1300 hours	<b>LKP</b> Last tracking point: 4123395 17455205	<b>TFFS</b>	<b>PHASE</b> Initial
<b>MP DETAILS</b> Michael GIBSON/O'Connell - Pilot	<b>OBJECTIVES FOR OPERATIONAL PURPOSE</b> Develop MP Profiles  Determine search area  Deploy search resources  Confinement	<b>STRATEGY TO ACHIEVE OBJECTIVES</b> 1.1 Gather intel 1.2 Identify search areas  2.1 Intel from rescue 2.2 Intel from flight plan/trackers 2.3 Contact APT & ATIS 2.4 Tracking by P2 & Joe Manning  3.1 400 Rescue / Search / Hel - Helo / Helicopter <b>MUST verify AC</b>  4.1 Contact 300/30000/1000 4.2 Disruptive force 4.3 Callout support	<b>TO DO</b> - Update rescue 1800 hours - List out together - 20 calls - Handheld search 2000 hours - Contact O'Brien - Tracking for LSAR team
<b>NOK/CONTACT PERSON(S)</b> Louise GIBSON - 027091101			<b>RESCUE PLAN</b>
<b>WEATHER</b> See planning board	<b>COMMS PLAN</b>	<b>COMMAND</b> O/C Const John O'Connell/Hickins	<b>MEDIA UPDATE</b>
<b>TIMELINE</b> (Major events)			

*Safety Exercise DELAYED*

<b>SITUATION</b>		<b>MISSION</b> Evacuate May Shaw Locate Rachelle Andrews	
<b>TIME/DATE MISSING</b> 9/11/2018 1300 hours	<b>LKP</b> 637 147	<b>TFFS</b>	<b>PHASE</b> Search 0800 → 1600
<b>MP DETAILS</b> RACHELLE ANDREWS Shaw site loc: 0252000 2013330 LKP: SP 147 landing marking along ridge  LOCATED: MIRACLES SEARCH/RESCUE TEAM  LASTNAME May	<b>OBJECTIVES FOR OPERATIONAL PURPOSE</b> Evacuate May Shaw to staging area.  1- Locate Rachelle Andrews	<b>STRATEGY TO ACHIEVE OBJECTIVES</b> 1.1 - Determine best means to - rescue May 1.1.1 - Helo landing area 1.1.2 - Walk out via Ross Ridge  2.1 - Sign cut LKP (north along ridge towards Tapslops from 637 147) 2.1 - Sound line along above route 2.3 - Confinement 2.4 - Further search along final features	<b>TO DO</b>
<b>NOK/CONTACT PERSON(S)</b> Louise GIBSON			<b>RESCUE PLAN</b> Evacuation Plan Rescue support from search rescue Command Helo Search team
<b>WEATHER</b> See planning board	<b>COMMS PLAN</b>	<b>COMMAND</b> O/C Cam Ellis	<b>MEDIA UPDATE</b>



IMT planning



Staging area

