

Exercise Evaluation Report

Exercise 'Jafa'

Location: Eastern Bay of Plenty

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Executive Summary

Eastern Bay of Plenty Police SAR District has recently had a number of challenges ranging from a changing political landscape to providing capacity for multi day searches. Exercise 'Jafa' was designed to address these issues and provide insights to improving practice.

Objectives concerned IMT changeovers, strengthening Iwi relationships and providing opportunity for teams to refresh and practice field skills.

This report records recommendations based on observations and other qualitative evidence. The recommendations and supporting evidence was the outcome of a SAREX and should be read in that context.

It was the first time the SAR group had undertaken an IMT changeover. The strength of this evaluation lies in how open this group was to the process. Many of the recommendations were voiced in the 'hot debrief' which reflects a self-awareness and motivation to implement constructive suggestions for improvement. The results confirm the aim of the exercise was achieved and objectives tested.

1. Recommendations

- Review CIMS guidelines with particular reference to the logistics/ planning functions and role visibility
- Use training opportunities to practice and review the GSMEAC format for both IMT changeovers and field briefings
- Implement strategies to maintain search effort during and immediately after changeover
- Scale search responses in accordance with all impacting factors
- Continue to integrate Iwi at all levels into the SAR educational framework and SAR response structure
- Use established protocols between different Iwi and SAR groups to guide local standard operating procedures
- Review pre deployment field checks and adjust to accommodate risks identified by field teams in this SAREX
- Written field tasking should include detail on coverage to avoid ambiguity
- Use regular training opportunities so field teams measure performance
- Review how 'all of operation deployments' are recorded and tracked

2. Introduction

'Jafa' was a full scale 3 day exercise organised for the Eastern Bay of Plenty Police District by the Police SAR coordinator and the Whakatane LandSAR group.

Preplanning for evaluation consisted of a telephone meeting between the Police SAR coordinator and the evaluator to establish the aim, specific objectives and how they would be measured for the exercise. These were drafted and further discussed by the organising committee before the final parameters established.

The exercise involved 2 full IMT's, an 'umpire', field teams and a lost party. A helicopter and other logistical support for in field deployment and at the ICP was organised. The scenario was provided by the lost party and included a safety plan.

There were 2 IMT changeovers conducted during the exercise.

3. Background

3.1 Background to the Exercise

A review in 2017 expressed some concern that in an extended search there had been no IMT changeover and the use of documentation not aligning with those on the NZSAR website. An IMTEX was organised in February that addressed these issues using 'table top' exercises. Following this a full scale exercise was planned for May 2018 where similar objectives would be practised and tested.

As well as concerns in the search review there has been significant political change as to the 'guardianship' of Te Urewera that also needed to be addressed. Northern Te Urewera is an area where there is significant SAR activity for the group.

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

The exercise was conducted between Friday 18th to Sunday 20th May 2018 and located in the Waimana valley. It was organised by the Eastern Bay of Plenty Police and Whakatane SAR. Key people were:

Police SAR coordinator for Eastern Bay of Plenty

A representative from Whakatane LandSAR Committee

3.3 Participating organisations

NZ Police, Whakatane LandSAR, Rotorua LandSAR and Whakatane AREC. Tuhoe with the tribal authority over the area were identified as having a relevant interest

3.4 Exercise aim

Conduct a full scale SAR exercise in the Northern Urewera that tests the IMT functioning for an extended search.

3.5 Exercise objectives

3 broad objectives were established

- To practice and effect IMT changeovers in accordance with current NZ best practice
- To strengthen Iwi relationships with SAR Police and the local SAR group
- To provide the opportunity for field teams to refresh and practice skills. This practice to enable the IMT to function in real time.

3.6 Exercise Scenario

The scenario was searching for a missing hunter in the Otupukawa stream and related catchment areas. There were indications of possible depression along with the subject's stated purpose ie hunting.

Initial notice was at approximately 1400hrs Friday which consisted of a phone call from the subject's sister reporting him overdue from a one day hunt on the Thursday. The initial ICP was at the Whakatane Police Station where the IMT assembled, collected information and developed the Initial Action Plan. The ICP was moved to the Lion's Hut, Waimana later that day from where a communications net was established and field teams were deployed. The subject's vehicle was located and a direction of travel established late on day one. During Saturday three field teams were deployed and remained in the field overnight. The exercise concluded midday Sunday with field team search effort evaluations and a 'hot debrief'.

4. Evaluation Methodology

4.1 The agreed outcomes of the evaluation activity

A report with recommendations based on the objectives and their KPI's. See appendixes

4.2 Evaluation scope

For IMT changeovers included:

CIMS structure: Implementing, maintaining and scaling the response levels

Documentation (including Action Plans) and a search file that facilitates an IMT changeover

G-SMEAC briefings and the maintenance of search effort during a changeover

For strengthening Iwi relations included:

Identifying Iwi representatives and exploring the relationship between themselves and key Police and LandSAR personnel both before and after the SAREX

Iwi representative's knowledge on SAR structure

Integration of local LandSAR members during the SAREX

For field teams refreshing and practising skills included:

Equipment and clothing

Briefings and debriefings

Processing field information

Reporting coverage

Recording and reporting

Excluded from scope:

In field observations of ground teams

Scenario and adequacy to test functions

Role of umpire

Search result

Iwi and police relationship at a governance level

4.3 Aspects of the exercise observed, what was not observed

All IMT functions were observed from exercise start to end. For field teams the focus was on their recorded interaction with the IMT i.e. no infield observations were taken.

Objective data was collected by way of photographs and the copying of forms and logs. Observations and other types of evidence was listed on a template against the agreed KPI's. Interviews, conversation, briefs etc is in the form of notes taken a time.

4.4 The process followed in preparing and submitting the report

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

4.5 Other information

Nil

5. Findings

Suggestions against the KPI's are in italics and those relevant in brackets. Objectives and the KPI's can be referenced in the appendix.

Objective 1 – to practice and effect IMT changeovers in accordance with current best practice.

The KPI's related to achieving effective IMT changeovers centred on structure, documentation and briefings.

Structure

The group has well thought out systems within the IMT so information is shared and potentially situational awareness well maintained (*Note 1*). In the initial and subsequent control points CIMS structure was clearly displayed and roles allocated. Those in roles could be identified by wearing appropriately named jackets. There were times where roles changed e.g. IC changing where jackets were not worn or the chart updated. While those in the IMT knew who was fulfilling those roles it would not be apparent to other interested parties such as family, police hierarchy or media.

So leadership is visible and identifiable to interested parties updating the CIMS chart and the wearing of role jackets is seen as important (A1.2, 1.3)

Logistics mostly related to running office systems with communications and transport semi independently of a logistics manager. This was more a case of people knowing what needed to be done without being directed to do so.

For a more complex operation in resourcing a forward plan there would need to be more definition for the Logistics Managers role. (A1.1, 1.4)

Planning was well supported and scoped by maps that looked beyond the initial response. The scenario and the role of the 'umpire' brief did limit a fully developed search area. It was noted the IMT knew the boundaries of where the subject was which would have been identified as a region within a much more developed search area.

The Intelligence function and information gathering was limited by the scenario. The ability to gather information from multiple sources would have helped in the scenario analysis. This function was one area where role creep was identified but it did not affect relationships within the IMT or outcomes.

The group could consider that the processes that fit with a particular functional unit is led by that unit (A1.4)

Facilities were well laid out in marked designated areas e.g. desks marked for Operations, Planning and Intelligence etc.

The ability for an incoming IMT to gain situation awareness rests in part on documentation. Charts were clearly displayed and files centralised. Meetings were minuted and information could be easily accessed. The display of SARTrack mapping and team location helped all in the IMT. NZSAR forms were well integrated into the recording of the search.

G-SMEAC changeover briefing

Two IMT changeovers occurred and although the briefing was delivered in G-SMEAC the character of each differed widely. Briefing format should enhance the efficiency of information transfer. There was multiple delivery of same content by different managers in the first briefing. Planning discussed situation as well current operational tactics and deployment. The latter was covered again during the brief by the operations manager.

The brief on command structure would have been enhanced by referencing the chart which had further functions described such as liaisons and specific to this SAREX an 'Umpire'. The fact that a full multi period IAP had been written and filed was not alluded to although some detail of a forward plan was given.

More practice and observing experienced practitioners would help the delivery of a GSMEAC briefing. (A3.1) (Note 2)

Changeover can take time and continuity of search effort is important. The first formal briefing took 40 minutes before managers briefed to individual roles. The briefing was interrupted on several occasions to allow the listening and recording of radio messages by Comms. Some suggestions (1) isolate comms from the main room (2) if in the same room use headsets for the radio operators (3) time changeovers at a time of low search team activity eg evenings.

If the outgoing IMT is dispersing contactability by way of phone numbers would be necessary. These normally be recorded in documentation e.g. on an IAP.

- It took some time for the incoming operations team to get total awareness. Some team numbers were confused which led to inappropriate tasks. Having a team status board displayed, which contained team's current task would help. Other suggestions at the time were a larger electronic map display and future team tasks visually represented (electronic or as an acetate map overlay). In the 'cold' debrief there was discussion on achieving 'continuity' in the changeover. Developing systems familiarity and capacity were the main topics. Suggestions were:
 - Having capacity within the local SAR group
 - Having capacity at regional level and with adjacent groups
 - Integrating local management people into an incoming 'out of area' team (Note 9).

It is the evaluator's opinion that emphasis should be directed on the last two points. This better achieves an IMT managing the search that has skills and new perspectives. It also builds IMT's who have gained appropriate background and experience for extended search. This is a needed sector resource.

Strategies need to be considered so search effort is maintained during and immediately after changeover. This relates to radio communications, contactability of the previous IMT and current field team activity. (A3.2)

Action Plans were written and displayed for each operational period. At the time of the second operational period the subject had been missing in excess of 60 hours. A period during which survivability and responsiveness would have been rapidly decreasing. While survivability was listed as a factor in the action planning process it was not reflected in a need to scale up the response at that time. The evaluator is mindful that this was a SAREX conducted within known time limits. One advantage of an incoming IMT is a review of the action plan where fresh consideration can be given to impacting factors.

Any incoming IMT (in particular the IC in conjunction with Planning and Intel) should review the action plan and scale the response appropriately and in accordance to impacting factors. (A3.4)

Objective 2: Strengthening Iwi relationships with SAR Police and the local SAR group

The KPI's related to strengthening relationships centred on identifying key Iwi representatives, their understanding of the SAR organisation, SAR response processes and the level of responsibility given within the structure. Conversations with key people explored attitudes before and after the SAREX.

The evaluator was told Tuhoe want agreements at a governance level (*Note 3*). This report will only concern itself with local relationships. From conversation relationships were referred to as being in their infancy. (*Note 4*)

There appeared to be a willingness and a capability from within the Eastern Bay of Plenty Tuhoe to be involved in a SAR response. The view as tangata whenua was the responsibility they had to their manuhiri (visitors). (*Note 5*)

It was found, of those attending, knowledge of the SAR structure was limited and varied in depth.

Aspects of tikanga were integrated into some practice. The IC spoke to and established a Iwi liaison in the command structure. Individuals from Iwi fulfilled management and field roles.

There were 'out of local area' networking opportunities during the SAREX with the attendance of the Police District Operations Manager and LandSAR Group Support Officer. This networking resulted in a discussion on how CNI SAR has engaged Tūwharetoa interests in a SAR response. An example of a process that could well be replicated for Te Urewera - Etxt to a tribal authority on call out then kept informed. In case of a body retrieval advice as to protocols appropriate to the situation.

It is the evaluators view that the SAREX furthered Iwi, Police and local group relationships on an individual basis. (*Note 6*) There is further potential in:

- *Encouraging local field team members and management to overlay their geographical knowledge by attending formal courses (B1.3)*
- *Continuing to gain greater familiarity with all key individuals who involve themselves and have an interest in a Northern Urewera SAR response (Iwi, Police and LandSAR) (B1.2)*
- *Exploring the arrangements between Tūwharetoa and the CNI Police SAR coordinators and their managers. (B1.5)*

Objective 3: To provide field teams the opportunity to refresh and practice skills

The KPI's relating to field teams was in their ability to perform comfortably in an operational environment and some specific skills needed to progress the search from a briefing to the debriefing. Some KPI's related to reinforcing recent training.

On the first night a tracking team worked in to night and all but one field team spent the night in the field during the exercise. Teams appeared well equipped for their environment and for what was expected of them although during the hot debrief one team reported they would have been prone to hypothermia if there were delays in being retasked ie standing around for any length of time.

Given these circumstances can occur it is recommended management and team leaders discuss and circulate an advisory of what is needed to prevent teams becoming hypothermic in their operational environment. Pre deployment and in field 'take five' checks should cover this aspect. (Ref LandSAR SMS for IMT Members)

The operations manager briefed the field teams. Most of the content had been pre written on a whiteboard. The briefing covered aspects including area, subject profile, search to date, safety and was well presented. The KPI for the briefing was that it should be in a G-SMEAC format. This format covers information in a specific order and once people are used to this they know the sequence.

Writing a G-SMEAC briefing with details against each category on the whiteboard would help practice not only those delivering the briefing but also those receiving it. (C2.1)

The tracking team was able to get DOT and track sign for a substantial distance. This helped determine the POA's for management. The team leader was also aware of assumptions made with the track followed. Clues were missed that would have influenced the scenario and search techniques used. There was recent activity of the subject at the hut toilet and on a travel route from the hut.

A reminder for teams when processing huts it does include outbuildings, environs, and travel routes. (C2.3)

Coverage and search technique was questioned by the incoming IMT (Note 7)

In the log there is no record of teams being requested to sound search. Teams reported calling out the subject's name and listening but it wasn't apparent how often and where the gaps in coverage were. Within the first 24 hrs several teams had been close to the lost party's location. The lost party did not reply to the calls.

The evaluator feels that more emphasis (in this case) on sound search needs to be written into the tasks as well as during verbal briefings so ambiguity does not exist (C2.4)

Three debriefs and 2 Search Effectiveness Evaluations (S.E.E.) were carried out. It was a positive training aspect that management selected an inexperienced local LandSAR team to go through the debrief process. The debrief was carried out by Police and provided that opportunity to further build relationships.

The experienced teams were confident SAR operators whose field work underpinned management coordination and decision making.

Regular training opportunities should focus on all search techniques that allow teams to measure, reflect on performance and integrate key points into their own processes and standard operating procedures. (C2.1, 2.3, 2.4, 2.6)

Safety and team welfare

Not in the objectives but some aspects should be noted.

Management had systems in place to register and record possible responder's medical issues. Teams were briefed on safety. An overall safety plan was discussed along with the initial action plan. There was excellent consideration for team and individual wellbeing. It was noticed that there was an extra team (transport) on the whiteboard located at the radio desk that was not replicated on the operations team board (Note 8). It appeared the responsibility for deploying 'transport' was the Communications unit. On a larger operation this system could be found wanting. Some thought may be needed to make this system more robust. CIMS role descriptions and responsibilities as well as those described in the Incident Management Guidelines provides a useful basis.

Facilities in and around the ICP including the helicopter landing zone were well controlled. There was a suggestion parking Police vehicles on the adjacent public road would give better warning to road users.

The evaluator suggests

- *a review as to how 'all of operation deployments' are recorded and tracked*
- *discuss with team leaders the NZ LandSAR safety guidelines and in particular the 'Take Five Safety Field Checks' and how they could apply.*

6. Conclusions

The group had well thought out and operationally trialled systems however they have not been in a situation where there has been an incoming IMT to continue an extended search. The scenario tested the agreed objectives and KPI's. Some change in procedures is suggested. The biggest challenge is in the 'changeover' and for the incoming IMT being able to maintain the efficiencies and awareness of the previous IMT. Most of the responsibility for meeting this challenge is the outgoing IMT with its systems and processes. Exercise 'Jafa' presented an opportunity to identify incremental improvement and improve capacity for an extended search in this area.

7. Appendix

Agreed objectives and KPI's for SAREX	
Obj. A	To practice and effect IMT changeovers in accordance with current NZ best practice
A 1	To implement the CIMS structure from initial action, maintain and scale appropriately throughout a SAR response
A 2	To document and manage the search file so it facilitates an IMT changeover
A3	To manage IMT change overs according to current NZ best practice
Obj. B	To strengthen Iwi relationships with SAR Police and the local SAR group
B1.1	Key Iwi representatives are identified
B1.2	Iwi representatives know and have familiarity with key Police and SAR group personnel
B1.3	Iwi participants understand the SAR response structure and processes
B1.4	Iwi representatives are given responsibility within the response structure
B1.5	Interactions are positive
B1.6	Feedback sought by way of conversation and observation on the Iwi/ SAR relationship pre/ post SAREX is positive
Obj. C	To provide the opportunity for field teams to refresh and practice skills. This practice to enable the IMT to function in real time.
C1	Field teams are familiar with clothing and equipment requirements for a SAR response appropriate to terrain and climate
C2	Field teams are able to
C2.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive a G-SMEAC briefing
C2.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locate (where appropriate) relevant tracks and clues
C2.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process clues (incl LKP) and other field information
C2.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Record coverage
C2.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following track
C2.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Record and report
C2.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in a S.E.E debrief

(Note 1): Photos of IAP's and plans including demobilisation plan. These were all discussed by the IMT

(Note 2): Opinion: Police District Operations Manager and evaluator's record

(Note 3): TB;DW

(Note 4): TB;DW

(Note 5): TB;DW

(Note 6): WH (local marae delegate in Tuhoë structure)

(Note 7): Query incoming IC and log

(Note 8): Photos team and comms boards

(Note 9): Cold debrief evaluators minutes

Other evidence to support recommendations is available