

# **Exercise Evaluation Report**

**Southern Police District SAREX**

**Borland - November 2022**

Location: Borland Lodge

Date: 11-12-13 November 2022

Report version: FINAL

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Contents

- 1. Executive Summary..... 3
- 1. Recommendations ..... 4
- 2. Introduction ..... 5
- 3. Background..... 6
- 4. Evaluation Methodology ..... 8
- 5. Findings ..... 9
- 6. Conclusions ..... 11
- 7. Appendix A ..... 12
- 8. Appendix B.....14

## 1. Executive Summary

The Southland Police District SAREX based at Borland Lodge was held over the weekend of 11-13 November 2022

The exercise was attended by members from LandSAR groups, Amateur Radio Emergency Communications (AREC) and Police SAR Squads from the Otago and Southland region.

Newer members in both Incident Management Team and Field Search Teams were combined in blended teams and worked alongside experienced members undertaking a real-time exercise.

Considerable learning and experience were gained by all participants putting into practise a range of skills learnt during theoretical training.

Both the IMT and Field teams were tested in a realistic scenario setting and environment that provided opportunities to further develop their skills and abilities.

The Aim's of the exercise was virtually fully achieved, however new staff should be encouraged to continue development of their skills with search management courses and field related training courses.

## 1. Recommendations

Expand the pool of laptop computers with larger screen displays to enhance utilisation of SARTrack

Undertake functional training with Garmin In-reach technology to build familiarity on how to operate.

Succession planning, continue expanding the pool of IMT members, and encourage formal training with SAR Management courses, Initial Response, Extended Search Management, and Police SAR Managers Course.

## 2. Introduction

New Zealand Police are required to exercise with partner agencies choosing an environment typical where search and rescue (SAR) operational responses occur. The Southland Police Area is the designated host of the Southern District SAREX for 2022 and has chosen Borland Lodge which provides this environment.

The Police SAR squad personnel from across the wider Otago and Southland region work closely with Land SAR groups and Amateur Emergency Radio Corps from the same region. Importance was placed on the ability to train with groups outside of Southland and to develop and maintain relationships.

The scenario for this SAREX was a missing student from a school trip based from Borland Lodge who was reported missing from the school overnight trip to the rock bivy.

The Incident Management Team were required to plan a hasty response on Friday evening and a formal search plan for Saturday. Field teams were tasked for Saturday and the field search concluded late on Saturday afternoon for a debrief and dinner.

The decision not to continue the SAREX overnight and into Sunday is due to the distance many teams need to travel to return home.

Borland Lodge and adjacent Public Conservation Land provides a variety of terrain with rivers, streams and tracks amongst mature beech forest. The Lodge is a popular destination for schools and community groups

## 3. Background

### 3.1. Background to the Exercise

Police and Land SAR have recently recruited new members into teams across the Southern Region and the Borland SAREX was designed as an opportunity for new members to work beside experienced members and gain knowledge, both in field searching and incident management.

Southland Police have a succession plan in place to get more qualified SAR Coordinators and the SAREX is a good opportunity to expose police and volunteer staff to varying IMT roles.

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

Dates: 11– 13 November 2022

Location: ICP – SAR Base

Borland Lodge, Monowai, Southland

Search Area – Borland Burn River Valley

Organising Agencies: NZ Police and Land SAR Southern Region

Key People: Sgt Ian Martin, Snr Sgt Brian Benn, Jo Irvine, Stephen Parry, Bevan McNaughton

### 3.3. Participating organisations

NZ Police, Dunedin, Central Otago Lakes, Fiordland and Invercargill

Dunedin Land SAR

Gore Land SAR

Invercargill Land SAR

Clutha Land SAR

Catlins Land SAR

Fiordland Land SAR

North Otago Land SAR

Amateur Radio Emergency Communications – Dunedin/Invercargill

Land SAR Group Support Officer

### 3.4. Exercise aim

To carry out a multi-agency search providing the IMT and Field staff that are new to the roles the opportunity to train and gain knowledge alongside experienced members and develop relationships with groups outside of Southland.

### 3.5. Exercise objectives

1. All participants return home safe.
  2. Experience operating an Incident Management Team (IMT) using the facilities at Borland Lodge.
  3. Build a working relationship with the many LandSAR groups within Southern District.
  4. Southland Police have a succession plan in place to get more qualified SAR Coordinators. This SAREX will be a good opportunity to expose Police staff to varying IMT roles.
  5. Several SAR operations in Southland in recent years could have benefited using a wheel equipped Ferno Washington stretcher.
  6. Familiarisation of the use of Wandatrak.
  7. Use of Garmin Inreach as an option to communicate tasks.
  8. Use of SARTrack to manage the search
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### 3.6. Exercise Scenario

On Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> November 2022 a group of 30 students from a Southland school left Borland Lodge and walked the track to the Rock Bivouac. One student was reported missing when the group arrived at the Rock Bivouac, and no one can recall seeing him since starting the walk from the car park near Borland Lodge. The missing student has Progeroid syndrome and is not familiar with the area.

## 4. Evaluation Methodology

### 4.1. The agreed outcomes of the evaluation activity

A report to be written summarising observations of the SAREX in relation to the stated objective and the KPI's.

Recommendations to be made on those observations

### 4.2. Evaluation scope

To observe the Incident Management Team at the ICP and report on the ability to function and manage the exercise and some field team observations.

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

Incident Management Team management and coordination

Actions of IMT from Friday evening to conclusion of the SAREX Saturday evening

SAREX group briefing Saturday morning

Team briefings prior to deployment to the field

Communications between SAR Base and Field Teams

Several Field Teams in field searching

Mobilization of wheel equipped Ferno Washington stretcher

Debrief and demobilization of field teams

Not observed

Field teams further out in the field

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

Consultation was made from Jo Irvine, the Southern District Search & Rescue Assistant Coordinator four weeks prior to the SAREX to confirm my availability.

Information was provided about how evaluation works and SAREX objectives

The SAREX plan & objectives was developed by a planning team of Sgt. Ian Martin, Snr Sgt Brian Benn and Stephen Parry. This was supplied one week prior.

The evaluator attended the SAREX from Friday night through to Sunday morning.

Evidence was collected by observations and notes recorded at the time.

### 4.5. Other information

The lost person report was provided on Friday evening as the IMT was assembling providing more detail about the missing subject.



## 5. Findings

### Exercise Planning

The SAREX plan was developed by Sgt Ian Martin, Stephen Parry and Snr Sgt Brian Benn

The missing student plan was designed to be realistic for the Borland Lodge location which is used by many schools from across the Central Otago and Southland regions. Concept was to involve new people to search and rescue to work alongside experienced practitioners to gain experience.

The Purpose, Aim and Objectives of the SAREX were developed shortly before the SAREX .

### Exercise Conduct

Friday – November 11<sup>th</sup>

Participants arrived progressively during the evening due to the long distances and time required to travel into Borland Lodge

The AREC vehicle and IMT resources and computers were on site by mid evening and the IMT personnel assembled at 20:00hrs.

Personnel were assigned roles with assigned vests and a scenario briefing was provided by the organising team.

This included a written initial missing person report and a completed search urgency evaluation with a score of 22, which included 3 ones!

The evening objective was to plan a hasty search for Friday evening followed with detailed search plan for Saturday.

As the evening progressed it became apparent by the gaps on the T Card Holder Board there were insufficient field searchers to mount a hasty search operation that evening.

Planning focused on Saturday tasking work, an Incident Action Plan (IAP) was developed and prioritised taskings were prepared. Computer systems with the SARTrack network was established with mapping and message log systems.

IMT team being made up of a blend of new and experienced members worked cohesively together and concluded work late on Friday evening.

Saturday November 12<sup>th</sup>

The IMT personnel for the Borland SAREX resumed at 07:30 and completed immediate outstanding field tasking instructions.

A full exercise briefing and introductions to key people was led by Sgt Ian Martin and Snr Sgt Brian Benn. The Incident Controller briefed the SAREX assembled group about the scenario subject and general exercise plan and personal assigned to teams.

Team leaders were briefed individually about their assigned tasks and issued with maps, radios, and Garmin-in reach devices.

Other personal waiting for deployment were provided practical hands-on Wander Track training

Six search teams comprising 27 field searchers were tasked and deployed by mid-morning. Following this the Incident controller called a review meeting of the IMT.

During the morning, teams searched as tasked in the Borland Burn Valley reporting a variety of finds, footprints, physical evidence by radio. Around 90 minutes into the SAREX operation it became apparent there was confusion about allocation of team numbers assigned to messages. The Operations Manager liaised with the AREC operations team and smoothly resolved the issue.

A No Duff Ankle Injury came in around 10:40 involving a field team member. It was established this person could walk out with some support, personnel were dispatched to provide the support and enable the team to continue with their task.

Late morning two field teams were observed working as a combined group searching using purposeful wandering and sound sweep techniques in relatively open beech forest terrain as part of their prescribed tasking. Reported during the debrief terrain encountered in the bush made the combined sound sweep too difficult, both teams decided to work separately.

Early afternoon the IMT spent time strategic planning for the 3<sup>rd</sup> search phase, search options for the night, tactics and additional resources required. Logistics provided confirmation these could be obtained, and that accommodation and food was arranged. Planning for roster shifts managing SARTrack.

Late afternoon it was reported that the missing subject "Korrie" was located by team 5 using sound sweep technique. Recovery of the subject was planned, and all other teams were coordinated to meet on the Borland Burn Track to conduct a stretcher recovery to test the "Wheel equipped stretcher"

The stretcher exercise was successful, the large dimension tyre wheel manoeuvred easily over wind fall logs with the field teams bringing the patient back to the road end in good time.

Upon return to the ICP, debriefs were conducted with Team Leaders, verbal and written record was taken about the search work along with GPX files.

The Field component was completed by around 17:30 on Saturday.

A debrief encompassing relevant feedback was held after dinner involving all SAREX participants.

## 6. Conclusions

The SAREX at Borland Lodge was successful and objectives were achieved. It was pleasing to observe how all participants, the majority in blended teams conducted themselves and worked together. The field component was conducted in fine overcast weather.

Borland Lodge being a very popular education centre, the scenario was constructed in nature to what could potentially occur in real life and as presented was authentic. The objective to conduct a hasty search on Friday evening was thwarted by the distance logistics of teams arriving very late in the evening.

The objective “Experience operating an Incident Management Team (IMT) using the facilities at Borland Lodge” – the was well achieved with a mixed IMT team from the Southern Police Region with experienced and new members who worked calmly and cohesively during the entire exercise. Problems were resolved, it was nice to observe the personal approach and engagement, solving connectivity, resolving team identification on messages with AREC and tweaking the improvised room layout. The operation was a blend of technology (SARTrack), Whiteboard planning, Laminated templates, and a T Card Display of resources. Planning for the night operation, both strategically with methods and tactics was proactive.

Building relationships between the contributing LandSAR Groups and Police staff from Southern Police District was achieved, most field teams were blended from different groups and at the exercise conclusion everyone had made a range of new contacts.

The succession plan to get more qualified SAR Coordinators was progressed with a range of younger IMT staff being assigned lead roles within the IMT, with quite coaching they conducted themselves professionally and gained valuable experience.

Testing the wheel equipped Ferno Washington stretcher along a typical backcountry track was successful, participants appreciated the utility of this system for patient evacuation.

Familiarisation on the use of Wandatrak early on Saturday morning was proactive use of time while Team Leaders were being briefed, this delivered as a practical hands-on device search exercise.

Garmin Inreach units were issued to each team, the field operation trial as an option to communicate tasks was not achieved. Principally due to excellent radio communications this was in the end overlooked.

SARTrack was established from the commencement of the SAREX and operated by a small team of IMT staff on several laptops. Both the IMT and AREC team managed the message system well, capture of resources and upload of progressive search effort. Discussion and planning about arranging a team roster to manage SARTrack was being thought about.

The debrief process at demobilisation was solid and generally the full SAREX debrief feedback was positive

## 7. Appendix

- Key Performance Indicators
- Southland LandSAR and AREC members ability to train with groups outside of the Region.

• KPI	• Achieved?	• Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience operating an Incident Management Team using the facilities at Borland Lodge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achieved</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The IMT established, ICP room with Whiteboards, T Card Holder, computers, and map screen displays. Wifi connectivity issues with AREC resolved using a cable connection and layout design proactively improved.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build a working relationship with the many LandSAR groups within Southern District</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achieved</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Both IMT and field teams were a blend of members from across the region. All developed good working relationships and developed good contacts.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Southland Police have a succession plan to get more qualified SAR Coordinators</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achieved</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New staff were engaged in lead IMT roles with experienced mentors who provided advice as required. Valuable experience gained by new personnel.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Train with the wheel equipped Ferno Washington stretcher</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achieved</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The test of the wheel equipped Ferno Washington stretcher along a typical backcountry track was successful, participants appreciated the utility of this system.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Familiarisation on the use of Wandatrak</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achieved</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Field team members received hands-on training with using the Wandatrak device in search mode for hidden transponder devices</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of Garmin Inreach as an option to communicate tasks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partly Achieved</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each field team issued with a Garmin Inreach, these were linked to phones, however due to excellent radio communications these were not tested.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of SAR Track to manage a Search</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achieved</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SARTrack software was operated by both the IMT-MSU and AREC. A full log of messages, evidence of search effort recorded. IMT would benefit with having more laptop computers to display SARTrack.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All participants return home safe</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achieved</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Considerable distances travelled by participants; fatigue managed to ensure everyone travel home safely.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>KPI</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Achieved?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comments</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>IMT operates within the CIMS principles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Achieved</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>IMT roles appointed, role jerseys worn. Information was communicated within the IMT, participants generally worked within role.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>IMT operates in accordance with the CIMS model</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Achieved</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>IAP is established for the planned operational period; review meetings led by the IC. Associated plans, communications, safety plan all developed</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>IMT supports field resources throughout the exercise</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Achieved</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Team taskings were relevant to available information, and once further intel was received taskings were modified appropriately and communicated. All teams debriefed at the conclusion of the exercise</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Event log maintained</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Achieved</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Radio messages logged in SARTrack by AREC team, decisions and actions recorded in the log</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>IMT maintains situational awareness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Achieved</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular meetings held with IC, Planning and Operations. Review of field progress with tasking changes communicated appropriately</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Health &amp; Safety and welfare monitored</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Achieved</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Safety plan developed. Team briefings included the operation JSA. A no duff injury was responded to with support provided to bring the injured party back to ICP. Fatigue management part of the exercise planning.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Test communication infrastructure in SAR environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Achieved</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AREC team with police support established excellent communications. AREC mobile communication bus coupled with field repeater units operated efficiently with good communications with field teams.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SAR personnel carry out a search to locate the missing party</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Achieved</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SAR teams, most composite teams from across the region with new searchers operated effectively as tasked. The teams observed were applying appropriate search techniques. Missing party located with sound sweep method.</li> </ul>



Appendix - B

INCIDENT ACTION PLAN			NZSAR New Zealand Search and Rescue
<b>Situation:</b> 16 year old student last seen heading for the South Barland Track. Intending to catch up with navigation group overnighiting at Rock Biv.		<b>Phase/Operational Period:</b> Phase 2.	
<b>Mission/Goal:</b> To locate missing person.		<b>Comms Plan:</b> SIMPLEX-ESXD7  REPEATER-ESB57  * cellphone	
<b>Date/Time Missing:</b> 12:15pm Thurs 10/11/22	<b>OBJECTIVES FOR OPERATIONAL PERIOD</b> (Keep it SMART)	<b>STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE IT</b>	
<b>Missing Person and NOK:</b> Koree Levi BLACK	1 Containment 2 Establish Comms 3 Taskings for phase 2 4 Establish teams	Track traps, roving patrol AREC, repeaters up ✓	
<b>LKP:</b> Entrance to South Barland Track.	<b>Weather:</b> Partly cloudy Southwesterly's developing.	<b>Safety/Hazards:</b> - Transportation - Earthquake (high risk) - Wasps - Tree-fall - Fatigue - River crossing. - Sun /dehydration.	<b>Rescue Plan:</b> - Stretcher out to road - 4WD - Heli evac
<b>Survivability:</b> 81%.	<b>COMMAND STRUCTURE</b>		<b>Media:</b>
<b>RCCNZ CAT II INCIDENT:</b> Incident Controller: <b>Pepper</b>			
<b>Intell:</b> Tracy	<b>Planning:</b>	<b>Operations:</b> Jeremy	<b>Logistics:</b> Malory









