



CASARA ONTARIO Report on STAREX 2017

Time and Place

The CASARA Ontario Provincial Exercise 2017 (SAREX 2017), also known as STAREX 2017 was hosted by the London Air Patrol (CASARA London) and held in St-Thomas (CYQS), 18-20 August. It is the fourth such large scale exercise they organised, previous ones being held in 2010, 2013, and 2015. Participants were lodged at Merlin House, Fanshawe College in London.

CASARA Participants

All CASARA Ontario operational zones attended. Air crews from London, Niagara, New Liskeard, Ottawa for a total of six aircraft, and seven ground crews from London, Niagara, Thunder Bay, Sudbury, North Bay, New Liskeard, Sault Ste Marie, and Ottawa participated. Air crews from Thunder Bay and Sault Ste-Marie were unable to reach CYWS because of weather and Ottawa had to delay its arrival. All told, more than 60 CASARA members participated.

Two members of the Executive were on hand along with the Training Officer, Standards Officer, Safety Officer and Search Coordinator and Deputy Standards and Training Officers.

Other Participants

Once again, the CASARA London has brought together all major players in Search and Rescue:

- Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF);
- Royal Canadian Navy (RCN);
- Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary (CCGA);
- OPP Emergency Response Team (OPP ERT);
- OPP Marine;
- Central Elgin Fire Department (CEFD);
- London Search and Rescue (OSARVA);
- Amateur Emergency Radio Service (ARES);
- St.Thomas Municipal Airport (CYQS);
- Salvation Army Disaster Relief Services.



Chrysler Canada donated four seven passenger vehicles for use during the event. Many local land owners offered up their property and private grass strips to accommodate the needs of the simulated searches. Other organisations, such as Huron Tractor, Enterprise Car Rental, St Thomas Flight Centre, and Kathy's Catering contributed to STAREX 2017. XU Aviation provided three wrecked aircraft at simulated crash sites plus there were two more donated from private individuals.

Activities

Six CASARA aircraft flew approximately 30 hours on assigned taskings with 30 minute dispatch times over a day and a half (27 elapsed hours (Saturday / Sunday). This includes the Air Rally on Sunday. In addition, to transit time, some crews were tasked inbound/outbound to CYQS which adds approximately another ten flying hours.

Air crews flew the following patterns: Creeping Line Ahead, Sector Search, Expanding Square, with twin engine aircraft over the Lake Erie flying coordinated patterns with the Navy. The seven ground crews performed Map and Compass taskings and First on Scene response in addition to homing ELTs and PLBs with guidance from aircrews. Overall, 18 taskings were performed and 500 KMs driven.

424 Sqn Herc Tiger 334 flew on Friday at CYQS for live para. Herc Tiger 337 flew on Saturday beginning with live para at CYQS and accepted a tasking with simulated Helicopter crash (using real helicopter), then live para at Lake Erie shoreline for five survivors who swam ashore from a simulated floatplane/pleasure craft incident. Ten (10) CASARA Spotters were on Board. Herc flew again on Sunday for live para and CASARA Spotter training.

424 Sqn Griffon flew on Saturday for tasking and CASARA Spotter (4 Members) Training. Hoist of CASARA Members was cancelled due to Actual callout from JRCC.

Communications

STAREX 2017 relied on CASARA Central Mobile Comms Centre (CARES Niagara), Navy Communications Centre in Port Stanley, and ARES (Amateur



Emergency Radio Services). ARES provided repeater facilities and six (6) companion vehicles to ground teams and a base operator to ensure seamless communications with base. Lieutenant Derek Niles RCN/HMCS Prevost was present in Search HQ and was a valuable addition to the coordination and comms relating to all marine assets.

Interoperability

Once again, aircrews from various zones successfully flew together in harmony. One OSARVA member joined a ground crew and actually found an ELT. Interoperability with SAR partners was again demonstrated and practiced with equal success on the ground, on the water, in the air and in between.

Accommodations

Fanshawe College proved to be an economical and practical location for participants who appreciated their facilities. The Salvation Army generously provided breakfast on Saturday and Sunday in addition to lunch on Saturday, on site at CYQS facilitated in their mobile canteen as a training exercise for their Disaster Relief Services. Friday Pig Roast from Cornell Farms and Saturday Banquet and Sunday lunch were provided by Kathy's Catering. The Saturday Banquet was also enhanced by live music from *The Bucket List*. The St Thomas Municipal Airport was exceedingly generous and accommodating, granting us wide use of all of their facilities for the duration of the weekend.

Safety

Ground and air teams adhered to all safety rules and protocols and were reminded of same with briefings.

No incident/accident was reported during the exercise but a member from Sudbury injured herself upon return home and another member was rear ended on the Toronto portion of Highway 401 with no injuries report. Form P-600 Incident/Accident Reports have been submitted to Provincial Safety Officer.



Organization

Next to TIGEREX, STAREX is likely the most complex and thorough exercise conducted by any provincial organization. Once again CASARA London put to contribution its young and enthusiastic membership. Kudos however go to Bill Laur, Camille Riggs and Tom Tipping for their extensive and tireless leadership role. Their organisational skills and commitment to success are second to none. The entire provincial membership owes them a huge debt of gratitude.

Media Coverage

CYQS is not a media focus and no presence nor coverage was noted during STAREX this year, although coverage has been provided in other years.

Social Media Presence

With the gradual reduction in CASARA members' average age, social media has become an effective new tool for communicating about our activities to a new and different audience.

Cost

The entire cost of STAREX 2017 has been budgeted and paid for by CASARA Ontario MO. Zones will submit expense claims to Provincial Administrator per normal procedures.

Benefit

STAREX 2017 offered yet another valuable opportunity to

- check the application of training standards amongst our units,
- validate their effectiveness,
- train in a realistic and very complex environment,
- cooperate with other SAR actors.

STAREX 2019

The Executive should start now looking at encouraging zones other than London to come forward to organise the next provincial exercise. London has written the book and set the standard for such exercises and other zones would greatly benefit from undertaking such a task. Again, bravo to CASARA London for its remarkable achievement.

Dated Aug 21/2017



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