

POWER OUT!!
March 30, 2019 Simulated Emergency Test
After Action Hotwash
1400, 30 March 2019

EOC/Net control provided the following general observations:

Antenna issue; the antenna was not deployable; half hour on the roof to get the antenna raised.
The EOC antenna must be redone/redesigned to be useable
The antenna issue caused a half hour delay in getting on
Because the EOC/Net control was delayed, net control duties taken over by COMM 2 lacking EOC. Established a net/commo before the EOC established a net
Once net control established; when EOC on air, took over from COMMS 2;
Traffic taken and written on paper; handful of emergency requests came through and there was response on Winlink
One bulletin sent at 11:30
Winlink outage on the Internet for real; Winlink couldn't operate. Real world issue.
Windows updates also happened; software locked up before CMS message was permitted.
Note: starting without Internet is way to go; Update before exercise to make sure that things don't need to happen.
Update the EOCs computers is takeaway.
Maintenance of the computer/Winlink should take place once a week
Winlink software can be put on flash drives to take to exercise; software to reinstall
MARC pointed out that this regular maintenance plan is important so that the software will be updated frequently enough that unplanned need can be handled.
Practice. Frequent access to EOC for familiarization and to update gear is a must!

Shelter/COMMS 2 provided the following general observations: :

10,130,1130. Were bulletins posted. EOC sent to Vann and then John Troupe at 1130.
Received a bulletin from the state.
Send 5 messages shelteree/mgr.
Heard (Halbert) heard many messages on 820
Complicated medical went both digital and mostly by voice.
Only digital message received at EOC was on an escaped....
Bug address made?
Bug photo transmitted? Got on Vann's computer but didn't transmit because Winlink down
[my note: not clear what success or what particular failures occurred; compare with separate emails to be secured later from Vann, AC4QS

IC/COMMS 1 provided the following general observations: :

Actors could not be found among the student body at SFC; actors for radio script from worksite of Susan, KG4VWI.
Didn't have a spare person to listen to the FRS radio...they couldn't pay any attention to FRS
Bug fact sheet: Confused as to whether they saw it
IC/COMMS 1 consumed by technical issues and couldn't follow FRS

Lack of direction as to what they were supposed to do with messages they were receiving or were supposed to transmit; overwhelmed by too much information, too many modes, lack of precise direction in what they were supposed to accomplish

By 1030 was up and running.

Zoo updates MARC got;

EOC got same messages.

Didn't know what to do with the information in the envelopes

Need to provide better injects – what am I supposed to do with the information that I'm getting?

MARC provided the following general observations: :

Did get information from FRS

All information transmitted by phone/voice; genus and species.

Second envelope not opened

Faciliator needed at EOC, when message traffic comes in, to decide what to do with the information.

IC should not be listening to this. IC should get from subordinates and divvy up and transmit. Shouldn't care about detail. Didn't have enough people to receive and transmitted. Never have enough people.

Need more assets to handle all the message traffic to go in and out in a timely fashion, LT Rulapaugh deployed to EOC as MARC faciliator; EOC needed a scribe and someone to handle the traffic, not digest the content.

MARC/hams should not be dispatchers; just passers of information.

In this exercise, in effect, the infrasctructure of dispatchers/IC is replaced by one person on radio trying to do everything.

Note: KX4Z, Gordon, compared with the Feb 2019 Symposium; messages should be prepared and merely sent; not digested with decisions as to what to do. The latter is too much for the communicators, given the time and constraints of the exercise.

COMMS 1 and Lt. Rulapaugh:

Lt. Rulapaugh responded to things and passed information to IC; not the other way around .

FRS laying on ground and talking

Advise EOC of village retirement center: MARC delegated to law enforcement

Find and fetch bugs: no

Advise new escape of gibbons: IC heard but couldn't respond MARC notified fish and game and law enforcement about the 220 lb lady on roof.

MARC asked location; told unknown; requested ACFR drone to deploy and search

Advise EOC of tiger?:MARC: yes

Advise State EOC; MARC advised state of tiger

Query from State EOC as to why power out. EOC got Gibby winlink message and responded in a number of ways. Did call about loose gibbon (MARC) and requested UF entomology about the bugs.

Supervising air ops: Yes, found tiger.

What went wrong generally, with evaluation of net control, traffic handling, and messages:

Traffic: formal versus tactical. Difference not clearly defined.

Our jobs should have been was pass messages; that's all. We were being asked to do more.
EOC is to dispatch to ESF49.

Communicators should not make judgment decision.

What do we do with the information we're getting? Exercise organizer needs to better direct
exactly what we want done with the information – passed

Exercise planner need to be very clear on what you want when you're asking for messages to be
passed.

The ICS 213 is a very confusing form; it's not intended for radio, Not like a radiogram.

213 flexible but not user friendly.

From and To should be very clear. Message traffic direction should be very clearly spelled out.

Confusion on where messages were to go.

From and TO needs to be practcies; incomplete

Addresses were an issue. Precedence etc. is an issue.

Message handling;

Spelling out and copy speed needs to be practiced

Need uniformity in methods of handling message.

We need a little flexibility, but shared view of the fastest/accurate way to get messages passed.

Parallel communicators: public safety and amateur

Type of traffic and exactness required is different [Note: this is the tactical v. formal message
difference]

Public [tactical]is not word for word; general content is OK. Public service's comms need is
different from amateur and formal message handling.

When it comes to resource requests (for example, food), then accuracy on the order of a formal
message is what is called for.

Need common operating procedure/especially for hand/difficut times.

213's designed for paper handling, not radio comms. Not designed for voice transmission.

Use formal traffic handling methods, e.g., "I have two 213s., "

NCS decides what to do with it.

Voice message handling: we need common pro words, common procedures; need to get better at
transmitting on VHF repeaters at copy speed time out issues frequent breaking.

Transmissions too fast; need to go SLOWLY so that the recipient can copy.

Disagreement on procdure? Just make it happen so that it works.

The use of the word "Break" is to mean emergency on the 820 repeater.

EOC on what did/didn't work:

HF was unusable; Larry Rovak got around this by remotely accessing his home transceiver.

VHF worked fine; repeater fine

Digital: used computer and Internet; didn't try packet

COMMS 2 on what did/didn't work:

After getting comms up, tried several HF SSB and tried to call but couldn't be heard by anyone;

Only communication was by repeater on 820
Digital: thought they'd sent messages but didn't really succeed until 1112 Test one
At 1140 Message received via winlink from EOC
Problem with HF voice is that no one was responding.
Digital ops on HF were ok after 1130
Amazing to see how useful VHF voice was with HF/digital Deb did great work

COMMS 1/IC on what did/didn't work:

IC couldn't get HF rig to work, juggled antennas so gave best antenna to VHF voice
Achieved VHF Packet to Santa Fe gateway...connect direct from Baofeng on ground
Read receipts – dont really do in an emergency
VHF phone no problem
HF digital: problems, but eventually achieve 80m digital by talking to KX4Z
Messages – KX4Z, Gordon, couldn't tell what was what with so few people.
Too many frequencies and too many modes:
Simple stuff is what actually worked; trained on ARDOP/etc., can make this
work
HF phone: had on all frequencies but no answers
Mike Ridlon's generator works fine, No message from EOC by HF phone but could have
Reduce the complexity and modes because we don't have many people.

MARC [other than above] on what did/didn't work:

Intent was to put tower at 100', which was near COMMS 2.
VTAC 36 put up.
Comms achieved with shelter and Santa FE.
Unable to hit EOC on portable. UTAC41 secondary.
MARC personnel had to work with their tertiary 8call90.
Initially, Lt Rulapaugh was able to hear other locations but they couldn't hear him.
Sounded like two repeaters working
Finally arrived at EOC and “cheated and called his personnel near COMMS 2 and IC and told them that he could hear them but they could not hear him.
Got around this tech issue by going to unplanned channels; MARC units could then communicate with each other.
While at the EOC, Lt Rulapaugh found that two repeaters were in fact talking at the same time; when this issue was bypassed, problem went away;
This was an SO repeater issue [?]; then the second repeater was turned off, everything worked fine; when they turned off the second it worked fine.
Once comms established information flow much smoother.
Terrain limits. Ridgelines made comms over them problematic.
“8 Call 90” is one that should work.
They will work the interoperability issues through their tech channels, and to prove that A through G plans in sequence can be used.
Personnel: Too few personnel. Radio operators, scribes, and coordinators are all needed.
Generator: failed on MARC unit; overcome with time, probably air lock,. Used MIMU. Didn't use commercial power.
Didn't have digital comms modes; but they've got funding for two PACTOR IV modems.
Lt Rulapaugh is pushing for every MARC unit to have SHARES capability.

Action item: Lt Rulapaugh did not know that at the EOC he could connect to the VHF antenna on the tower adjacent. While at the EOC he used his portable with a “rubber duckie” and that was not very good!

Future: use VHF antenna on roof!

Old public service radio in EOC. 1LT Rulapaugh doesn't know what frequencies the old EOC radio uses; analyze the channels and make sure they know what are narrow and wide band.

Add public safety VHF and UHF in the radio room so they can talk directly to the EOC; can't do it that way right now.

Basically, drill went well, good exercise with interops with amateur radio operators.

Hotwash ended at approximately 1545, 30 March 2019