



# The National Search And Rescue Committee

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Department of Homeland Security

Department of Defense

Department of Interior

Department of Commerce

Department of Transportation

Federal Communications Commission

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

## MINUTES

Regular Session 2-10  
September 30, 2010  
U. S. Coast Guard Headquarters  
Washington, DC 20593

### 1. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

The meeting was convened with the Secretary Mr. Richard Button. RDML Cari Thomas (USCG) was introduced as the new Committee Chair; RDML Thomas oversees Coast Guard response programs.

All participants introduced themselves. Enclosure (1) is the list of attendees.

### 2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Committee **approved** the minutes of its April 14, 2010, meeting with the following correction:

“...C-Port is a commercial fishing industry association involved in supporting maritime SAR” was replaced with “...C-Port represents marine assistance companies (boat towing and salvage companies) and is not affected with the fishing industry.”

### 3. MEMBER AGENCY REPORTS

#### a. Department of Commerce

Mr. Chris O’Connors (NOAA) reported that the SARSAT Agencies and Cospas-Sarsat are developing new 406 MHz beacon specifications in preparation for introduction of a medium Earth orbit search and rescue (MEOSAR) system. Cospas-Sarsat had convened an Expert Working Group (EWG) earlier in September to work on beacon requirements. Representatives of the twenty countries involved with the EWG drafted 15 minimum beacon requirements and 20 objectives. Work on beacon requirements and specifications will continue, with another EWG tentatively scheduled for February 2011.

The International Cospas-Sarsat Programme is finalizing a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with EUMETSAT for use of its satellites in the Cospas-Sarsat system.

Cospas-Sarsat is involved in the final stages of selecting a new Head of Secretariat to replace Mr. Daniel Levesque, who has served in that position for 25 years.

Mr. O’Connors indicated that he would start making Cospas-Sarsat reports available for further distribution to NSARC.

He then introduced Mr. Steve Roark (NOAA) to comment on NOAA liaison efforts with DoD related to beacon registration and false alert reduction.

Mr. Roark referred to an August NOAA-DoD meeting that had convened to consider policy deficiencies that might foster continued growth of beacon false alerts within the U.S. military in locations worldwide, often as the result of beacon testing. DoD uses about 30% of U.S. beacons, and NOAA has no way of tracking false alert causes. There is no synchronization or coordination between the NOAA registration data base (RGDB) and DoD's Joint SARSAT Electronic Tracking System (JSETS), which has about half as many beacon records as the RGDB. NOAA appends RGDB data to alerts, but cannot do so for the military beacons. Military beacon testing can potentially interfere with actual distress alerts. One reason for NOAA to know whether a beacon is registered in JSETS is that un-located alerts are not normally forwarded to SAR authorities unless the message can include actionable information, such as registration data. Civil SAR personnel have access to a number of international registration databases, but not to JSETS, so a policy is needed on release of military beacon registration data. Also needed are guidance within the military on when to activate beacons, the military contact for resolving false alerts, and measures to reduce false alerts.

Beacon testing causes many false alerts, and these tests are ineffective if not coordinated with NOAA for routing the resulting alert messages. Negative impacts of beacons activated for tests include needless dispatching of SAR resources.

NOAA is working with the Joint Personnel Recovery Agency (JPRA), which is responsible for military training, and also with the command that operates JSETS and the Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO). DOD is being very cooperative in identifying and resolving these issues.

**b. Federal Communications Commission**

Mr. Darryl Smith (FCC) stated that the FCC had nothing to report for this meeting.

**c. National Aeronautics and Space Administration**

Mr. Dave Affens (NASA) reported that NASA has a new memorandum of agreement with DoD to support personnel recovery. Some of the projects for which NASA has funding include studies or development of: signal reliability, system capacity, beacon survivability, search planning tools, and satellite-to-beacon return links for the Distress Alerting Satellite System (DASS) that would potentially use the satellite navigation signals. NASA also continues to support DoD exercises.

Mr. O'Connors commented that a return link would need to be identified by the SAR agencies as a requirement before it could be considered for DASS.

**d. Department of Transportation**

Mr. Mark Olsen (FAA) commented that out of over 200 alert notices to the FAA for overdue aircraft, all but one aircraft had been located. The FAA's response rate to distress alerts continues to improve, and all air traffic control (ATC) centers are being connected for this purpose.

The FAA had also been building better working relationships with international counterparts, including but not limited to those in Mexico and Canada.

Mr. Olsen commented on a pilot who had been saved on August 15<sup>th</sup> when his Cessna ditched in the water at night in Florida. The SAR response had been very good.

Mr. Darrell Hood reported that during the Deepwater Horizon oil spill response, the FAA had established the longest-lasting advisories and Temporary Flight Restrictions (TFRs) ever. Compliance with TFRs is voluntary, and they did not keep out all aircraft, including media aircraft. The FAA had to be closely involved with implementing the TFRs so that airspace access could be authorized for those who needed it.

### **Department of Interior**

Mr. Dean Ross (National Park Service (NPS)) began his report with a brief account of an incident involving the loss of three persons, including the pilot when an aircraft went down. After flying about 61,000 miles searching for the aircraft, it was found washed ashore.

The NPS will be rolling out a new system on or about mid-October this year that will support functions such as communications, distress alerting, and asset tracking. The system is called COMPASS. It will be highly automated, integrate many technologies, and cover all parks (about 21% of the U.S. land mass).

NPS is continuing to keep statistics on public use of satellite emergency notification devices (SENDs). Use of these devices has dropped in parks this year, and such use might result in issuance of a citation since they are often used for non-emergencies. The NPS is using media coverage and brochures to publicize the limitations of these devices and to ensure that, if they are used, they are used properly.

NPS plans to release a 2 ½ day course next March covering land SAR, and will also soon release a new NPS aviation policy document that will cover use of aircraft, including unmanned aerial vehicles, for SAR and law enforcement. This policy will mandate use of 406 MHz emergency locator transmitters for NPS aircraft.

### **e. Department of Defense**

Mr. Bob Newberry (DoD/DPMO) mentioned that European Command (USEUCOM) had been conducting table top exercises on Arctic response, and plans to continue to do so to become better prepared for various types of incidents that might require Arctic operations. DoD sees the Coast Guard as the leader on Arctic operations due to its civilian roles and capabilities, but DoD intends to be forward leaning on Arctic preparedness.

Mr. Joe Sokol (USNORTHCOM) reported that USNORTHCOM had assumed the role of Inland SAR Coordinator under the National SAR Plan from November 4, 2009, and that this had triggered a mission analysis. USNORTHCOM's new mission statement on SAR, which supports planning for routine through catastrophic incidents, is as follows:

*USNORTHCOM establishes and maintains the Search and Rescue System to coordinate and provide timely and effective response throughout the full spectrum of Civil Search and Rescue, honor international commitments, meet U.S. domestic needs, and assume DOD role as a Primary Agency for Emergency Support Function #9 planning and operations within the United States.*

SAR strategy and policy will remain with USNORTHCOM, while operational and tactical duties will be delegated to AFNORTH at Tyndall Air Force Base (AFB). The

Joint Personnel Recovery Center (JPRC) will be co-located with the Air Force rescue coordination center (AFRCC); together they will provide mutual support, to be referred to as the USNORTHCOM RCC (NCRCC), and provide a one-stop point of contact for SAR. Additional personnel have been added to handle these duties.

USNORTHCOM will also be the ESF #9 over Primary Agency for Land SAR.

Critical requirements had been established for Catastrophic Incident SAR (CISAR), cross-border SAR, and SAR that has high media impact or consists of mass rescue operations (MROs). Work on new MOUs with States has been on hold pending resolution of the changes discussed above.

USNORTHCOM will handle federal interagency coordination, while both USNORTHCOM and AFNORTH will be involved with the States. CISAR agreements between USNORTHCOM and the States could be either separate agreements or combined with State agreements on routine SAR.

**f. Department of Homeland Security**

Mr. Dean Scott (FEMA) reported that the new Urban Search and Rescue Branch Chief Mr. Fred Endrikat would report for duty on October 12, 2010.

The Emergency Support Function (ESF-9) Annex update is currently at the Assistant Administrator level for review and approval.

Mr. Scott said that FEMA's participation in the Hurricane Earl response was very successful from the Federal ESF #9 perspective and all FEMA Region and States needs were satisfied.

Mr. Scott noted that the National Level Exercise 11 planning is ongoing to include all levels of SAR participation for four FEMA Regions and eight States, and should involve participation from all four ESF-9 primary agencies.

The Urban Search and Rescue Incident Support Team 1<sup>st</sup> Training Course and Training Workshop will be November 2-5, 2010, in Memphis, TN. He said that FEMA has invited each ESF-9 Primary Agency to send two people and provide a 30-minute module on their Federal ESF-9 role.

The Chair commented that a Presidential Disaster Directive is being drafted.

**4. WORKING GROUP REPORTS**

**a. Research and Development**

Mr. Dave Affens (NASA) reported that the NSARC Research and Development Working Group had not convened since the Committee's last general session.

**b. Correspondence**

The Secretary reported that:

Work on the NSARC Land SAR Addendum, which has been a major effort, is ongoing; the draft Addendum is expected to be available for review by the Committee's Correspondence Group in early 2011;

Work on the National SAR Manual is continuing;

A version 3.0 of the CISAR Addendum is needed, as various additional national needs must be addressed; and

The 2007 National SAR Plan (NSP), which is signed by seven members of the President's Cabinet (Department Secretaries of the NSARC Member Agencies) needs to be updated again.

Update on Coast Guard activities.

The Secretary reported that the Coast Guard had attended NORTHCOM Hurricane Table Top Exercise 2010 in June and that it was really well received. The response to Hurricane Earl was a good lesson for the conduct of interagency SAR planning.

The Coast Guard has a revised instruction on MROs that emphasizes response, especially to passenger ship scenarios, and the passenger ship specialists in the Coast Guard district offices are becoming more competent regarding MROs. The Joint war fighter talks last April covered aircraft and ship mass rescue scenarios.

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) is supporting funding for DASS, but another interagency agreement is needed to address DASS funding.

Mr. Button had been working on an Arctic SAR Agreement involving eight nations; this will be signed by the U.S. Secretary of State.

In June, the U.S. had proposed the text of a SAR agreement for Cuba to consider, but Cuba had not yet responded.

The Coast Guard is working with a number of other nations (Malta, Mexico and others) on use of the Coast Guard search planning software, SAROPS.

## **5. U.S. CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION**

Mr. Boon Smith (CBP), with the Incident Management Coordination Branch of the Customs and Border Protection, commented that CBP duties are divided based on ports of entry or areas between. He reviewed the CBP SAR Program called Border Patrol Search, Trauma, and Rescue (BORSTAR), which develops highly specialized teams capable of responding to emergency SAR situations.

BORSTAR is based on a rigorous five-week training academy course, with prerequisite fitness and experience requirements. About 20 persons attend each class, and only about 15-20 percent of those who enroll actually complete the course. CBA has about 44,000 patrol agents and officers, but only about 200 certified BORSTAR agents. Training involves medical, air operations, swift water, 1<sup>st</sup> response, navigation, communications, cold water and desert survival and other disciplines. CBP conducts some international training as well.

The CBP conducts joint operations with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) and others. The Tuscan Area alone experiences about 200 deaths annually among immigrants.

## **6. RELEVANT ACTIVITIES**

### **a. Civil Air Patrol**

Mr. John Swain (CAP) reported that CAP's SAR hours had been decreasing; the reduction in the number of 121.5 MHz beacons was a contributing factor, as 406 MHz

beacon alerts were much easier to respond to. While the SAR hours were down, the number of lives saved had been higher, with 112 saves this year to date.

CAP supports the Air Force and States with non-SAR missions as well. CAP flew over 110 days related to the Deepwater Horizon incident, and took over 110,000 photographs.

**b. National Association for Search and Rescue (NASAR)**

Mr. Dan Hourihan (NASAR) announced that the 2011 NASAR Conference will be in Reno June 2<sup>nd</sup> through June 4<sup>th</sup>. The State SAR Coordinators meeting will convene during the two days preceding the Conference.

Mr. Hourihan commented that NASAR is redesigning its course delivery system. Education products and certifications are NASAR's main products. NASAR plans to reduce the cost of certifications and increase the number of certified instructors. Since traveling is a challenge for many instructors and students, NASAR hopes to develop local-level instructors with local credentialing so that training can be more accessible to everyone.

Mr. Cole Brown (Maryland State Police) expressed appreciation for NSARC's support of this year's State SAR Coordinators Conference, which was very successful. 25 States were represented. Mr. Brown is trying to encourage all Governors to at least assign a point of contact for SAR. Next year's meeting (May 31<sup>st</sup> -June 1<sup>st</sup>) will include federal presentations and SAR discussion.

**c. C-Port**

Mr. Terry Hill (C-Port) reported that the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) is developing a training course for local boat operators who otherwise would have no access to training; this will be a week-long course with certification.

**d. National and International Activities.**

Mr. Dave Edwards (USCG) was unable to attend, but provided a written report (enclosure (2)).

**e. Radio Technical Commission for Maritime Services (RTCM)**

Mr. Bob Markle (RTCM) was unable to attend, but provided a written report (enclosure (3)).

**f. Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) Task Force**

CAPT Jack Fuechsel (GMDSS Task Force) was unable to attend, but provided a written report (enclosure (4)).

**7. OTHER BUSINESS**

LTCOL Chuck Tomko (AFRCC) stated that AFRCC is working with the different Combatant Commands to develop an export version of the Inland SAR Course to provide in other countries under the sponsorship of the COCOMS. SOUTHCOM and AFRICOM have shown interest.

AFRCC rebid on their contract for SAR software, and as of October 1 of last year, stopped using SARMASTER. AFRCC is working with the vendor to field a web based

version, and Alaska RCC is joined up to be on the same system. Once fielded, AFRCC will present to our partners such as USCG, the States, and Canada for their review. As it is web based, there are no issues with connectivity.

There seems to be an uptick in the states requesting support. Sometimes the states do find assets before federal assets are committed and we turn off the federal support. This is assessed to be due economic challenges the states are experiencing.

Mr. Dan Lemon (NOAA/CSC) expressed appreciation for input received from this year's State SAR Coordinator's meeting that was valuable in developing requirements for new 406 MHz beacons. He also commented briefly about a successful international 'Exercise 24,' a September two-day earthquake event off the coast of Huntington Beach, California that generates a tsunami in Baja, along with surface and sub-surface oil spills. The exercise was sponsored by San Diego State University Visualization Center. The U.S. and Mexican Navies were heavily involved, as were scores of other U.S. and international organizations; with the help of organizations like the World Bank, thousands of people were involved worldwide online. One of the objectives was to test the use of social media as tools for lifesaving during disaster.

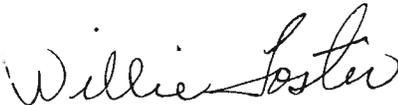
The Chair expressed appreciation to the NSARC members for being interagency SAR partners, and discussed a case involving Sri Lankan immigrants as an example of international cooperation between the U.S. and Canada. She also mentioned a federal-State effort referred to as 'maritime operations threat response' which identifies agencies that will take the lead for various scenarios. She said that she looked forward to working with NSARC over the next two years.

## 8. NEXT REGULAR MEETING

The next regular session is scheduled for February 3, 2011.

Respectfully submitted:

Approved:

  
for Mr. Rick Button  
Secretary

  
RADM Cari Thomas  
Chair

Date: 3-29-11

Enclosures: (1) List of Participants  
(2) International and national activities report  
(3) RTCM report  
(4) GMDSS Task Force report

Enclosure (1)

Regular Session 2-10  
September 30, 2010

**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**

<b>Names</b>	<b>Affiliations</b>
AFFENS, Dave	NOAA
BROWN, Cole	MD State Police
BUTTON, Rick	USCG
FOSTER, Willie	USCG
HAMILTON, John W	ARNG-AVO
HILL, Terry	C-PORT
HOOD, Darrell	FAA
HOURIHAN, Dan	NASAR
LEMON, Dan	USCG/SAR Consulting, Inc.
MERRIGAN, Patrick	USNORTHCOM
MUNOZ, Jesse	CBP
NEWBERRY, Robert	DOD/DPMO
O'CONNOR, CHRIS	DOC/NOAA
OLSEN, Mark	FAA
ROSS, Dean	NPS
RULON, Tim	NOAA/NWS
SCHUDA, Paul, Dr.	CAP
SCOTT, Dean	FEMA
SMITH, Boone	CBP
SOKOL, Joseph	USNORTHCOM
SWAIN, John	CAP
THOMAS, Cari, RDML	USCG
TOMKO, Charles	AFRCC
TURNER, Mark	USCG
ZAPATA, Rene	NGB
ZDUNCZYK, Thomas	DOD/DPMO

## Enclosure (2)

NSARC

National and International Activities

David Edwards

### 1. Recent Activities

- (May 2010) – IMO SAR Seminar in Italy. Two from USCG Office of SAR presented SAR system and search planning concepts to a diverse class of international students. This has become an annual event funded by the International Maritime Organization (IMO). This is in accordance with the MOU between IMO and the U.S. Coast Guard.
- (June 2010) – Global SAR Forum. International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) event hosted by United Arab Emirates (UAE). CAPT McBride was one of numerous international SAR experts and the AFRCC almost participated (but had to divert at last minute). Numerous gaps in global SAR effectiveness were identified and concepts were developed for addressing them. UAE submitted the Forum findings to the upcoming ICAO General Assembly (discussed in section below).

### 2. Upcoming Activities

- (September 2010) Triennial convening of the ICAO General Assembly – The FAA has the lead and typically pulls in agency subject matter experts to cover the agenda and papers submitted. The UAE submitted a SAR paper based on the findings of the “Global SAR Forum” discussed above.
- Recommendations included specific SAR actions to be added to the ICAO triennial work program. This session of the General Assembly does not have specific SAR actions but, based on the UAE paper and the general work on items such as unmanned aircraft systems, military/civil cooperation, etc, the next session could include specific work or papers on SAR.
- (September 2010) ICAO/IMO Joint Working Group on SAR – The annual convening of this international working group will be in Bremen, Germany this week. USAF and USCG provide one each of the 16 SAR experts (8 maritime and 8 aeronautical). Twenty five papers will result in numerous recommendations going to ICAO and IMO to consider for adoption on policy, standards, and practices. Among numerous country and international organizations attending will be a representative from COCOM AFRICOM. (December 2010) COCOM Civil SAR Workshop – The AFRCC is hosting this event being organized for the benefit of all COCOMs. Mr. Button to attend.

### Enclosure (3)

Radio Technical Commission for Maritime Services (RTCM's) Report:  
Mr. Robert Markle  
September 30, 2010

RTCM Special Committee 128 continues its progress on drafting a Standard for Satellite Emergency Notification Devices (SEND) (such as SPOT). An annex may be added to the SEND Standard to describe emergency operation center standards. Language was added to the draft Standard to discriminate between SENDs and other devices such as satellite phones, pagers, and OEM devices; and battery life was addressed so that the non-emergency functions would be turned off if necessary to conserve power for the emergency function of a device. Our objective is to prescribe devices which have performance equivalent to Personal Locator Beacons (PLB).

RTCM has also reached an agreement to assume management of the ProTECTS Alliance from Iridium Satellite. Iridium had started this group of companies to encourage rapid and orderly adoption of standards for duplex satellite data links for personal location, messaging and emergency communications devices (i.e. SENDs). It has grown to 57 companies! The participants feel that it should now be run independently of Iridium.

RTCM Special Committee 110 has completed and published a new amendment to the PLB Standard, which describes testing and performance of internal navigation devices (GNSS receivers). This should help ensure that GNSS positions are acquired rapidly and accurately in future devices built to the standard. The committee is working on a similar revision to the EPIRB standard, along with new wording to address battery labeling; emphasizing that only authorized batteries should be used since it is a lifesaving device. Also, most of the Coast Guard's recommendations on ergonomics have been added to the Standard. Other topics covered by SC-110 include battery life concerns (max and min battery storage temperatures); and ways to improve beacon registration and reduce registration errors.

RTCM SC-110 also continues to work on MEOSAR Next Generation Beacons, including contributing to the Copas-Sarsat Next Generation Beacons meeting (EWG-2) held recently.

Joint Special Committee 101/110 is about to complete its standard on handheld VHF radios with Digital Selective Calling and GPS.

The RTCM Committees meet next in December.

Enclosure (4)

Thursday, September 30, 2010  
GMDSS Task Force Report  
Jack Fuechsel

1. The Task Force met on 5 August 2010 in Arlington, Virginia at the RTCM Headquarters. The next meeting will be in Seattle, Washington on 29 September during the annual meeting of the National Marine Electronics Association (NMEA). The day before, the Task Force is sponsoring a special meeting of USA/Canada mariners interested in radio safety issues with over 40 people expected to attend.
2. A Joint meeting of IMO/ITU Experts convened in London 14-16 September to address issues of Importance to both organizations. In addition to the usual technical issues, the Experts had been asked to consider the GMDSS Modernization initiative and a third day had been added to the session for that purpose. Their report has been published and may help to focus input papers for the next meeting of IMO's Communications Search and Rescue Subcommittee meeting 7-11 March 2011.

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