

Determined Promise 03 After-Action Report

The Determined Promise exercise took place in the Las Vegas area Aug 18-29. Much of the exercise was table-top or simulation, however many participatory activities took place Tues through Thurs Aug 19-21.

I am very pleased at the number of members who volunteered to take part: about 50 members sent emails, called or told me personally of their intention to take part. Many responded to assignments to the Clark County Emergency Operations Center (EOC), the Emergency Communication Center (ECC) at the Clark County Government Center, and to the Mobile Command Post (MCP) deployed to Logandale. In addition, Bill Cornelius K8XC, Carolyn Cornelius K9XC and Dennis Cornell N7HRO prepared for an extended deployment to Indian Springs to support an exercise staging area and clinic, complete with Dennis' tower on a trailer. However, when they arrived at the EOC to be briefed, we found out that there were only simulated National Guard in Indian Springs, and so the deployment was aborted.

I'm sure many of those who volunteered, like myself, are disappointed that the physical play we had anticipated during the exercise did not occur, other than in the EOC, ECC and MCP. We were not written into the original script created by the DOD's Joint Task Force for Civil Support, whose exercise it really was, to the degree we had thought. The members assigned to the EOC attempted to educate the other EOC team members about ARES/RACES capabilities and encourage our use, but met with only moderate success. With the fast moving pace and stress of the overall scenario, listening to us was not a high priority. However, during the night, the scenario had the loss of the microwave relay to Carson City. At 2:27 AM we were deployed to the Thomas & Mack to process message traffic and at 3:13 AM we were deployed to support LVMPD after loss of their VHF antenna and car-to-car communications. Both of these were simulated. Others had their equipment and vehicles at the ready, including Frank Kostelac N7ZEV with Amateur Television (ATV).

Since the initial incident - the release of aerosolized pneumonic plague - occurred on the Strip, in order to eliminate the effect of an exercise on the economy, the actual 'play' was relocated to Logandale. In the scenario there was a 1000 bed hospital set up at the LV Convention Center and 8 schools were used as triage and medication distribution points. 2 Red Cross shelters were also established. There would have been more opportunities for us if these locations had not been simulated, but had actually been manned.

Our folks in Logandale not only had the distinction of being the only true 24 hour operation other than the security guards, but were instrumental in getting the National Guard on the air by helping them assemble their equipment and get their HF antenna up in the air. Later they did field service on the National Guard SGC Power Cube amplifier. In addition, they constructed an 80/40 meter dipole, got it 30 feet in the air and improved our HF link to Carson City and the ECC. Jack Cook N8RRL took his own home packet station down and installed it as a temporary digipeater on Beacon Hill to enable a consistent packet link between the MCP and ECC. VHF/UHF were plagued with intermod and a bad microphone connection at the Government Center, as well as a variable path from Angel Peak to Beacon Hill and back which we relied on for voice communications between the ECC and the MCP. HF conditions were spotty at best, but

we managed to check-in to most of the hourly nets held by Nevada RACES at the Division of Emergency Management in Carson City. John Neeley K6YDW set up a portable weather station at the MCP. Weather reports were sent by voice or packet hourly to the ECC and recorded on a digital map of Logandale maintained in the EOC

One of our major goals in the coming months is to present briefings on ARES/RACES to the Local Emergency Planning Committee, the Emergency Manager's Group, and wherever else we can, to ensure our capabilities are considered and called on in the future.

I thank all members for checking into the nets and standing by, or for working an assigned shift. Thanks to the Moapa Valley Amateur Radio Club for the use of their 147.39 repeater on Beacon Hill, Mark Hinds KI7D for the use of his 449.200 repeater and remote links and remote base, Andy Gagliardo for the continuing use of his 447.325 repeater on Angel Peak dedicated to ARES/RACES, and to the Las Vegas Repeater Association (HXO), the Nellis Amateur Radio Club and Steve Hernandez N7YOR for permission to use their repeaters. Thanks to the Las Vegas Radio Amateur Club for the use of their Communications trailer as our MCP. Their financial support is what made the MCP possible, and donations of cash or equipment are appreciated and still needed. There was lots of work completed on the trailer in the 3 weeks preceding the exercise - removing cabinets and installing additional operating locations, DC wiring, painting, etc. Vern Garman KOEGA and Jack Cook N8RRL did most of the work with others pitching in. Many helped in other ways. I apologize if I failed to mention you personally for your contributions to this exercise and to ARES/RACES, but we certainly value them.

Prepare for the next exercise or real disaster by taking the ARRL Emergency Communications Courses, Red Cross courses, making sure your gear is ready, put PowerPole connectors on all your radio DC power connections, get involved in writing plans or helping setup the hospitals and other EOCs, or volunteering to work on the trailer. Don't let the fire go out - we need to be there - when all else fails....

Please monitor our repeaters 147.18 (+) PL100 or 447.325 (-) PL127.3, and take part as you can. If you haven't updated your information in our database lately, or have yet to join, applications are available on our website at www.qsl.net/ccnvares.

If you have comments or questions, please contact me at 334-1196 or by email at aa5qj@arrl.net.

I estimate that we provided 1200 hours to the active portion of this exercise, plus untold hours in preparation. Active participants included Vern Garman KOEGA, Don DeCaria NF7R, Bill Marple AA7ZW, Art Sheldon K7ZE, John Neeley K6YDW, Jim Bassett W1RO, Jack Cook N8RRL, Bill Cornelius K8XC, Carolyn Cornelius K9XC, Dennis Cornell N7HRO, Gayle DeCaria KD7ODF, Mark DeCaria KD7SXA, Dudley Emer KK7IF, Dave Friedman N0CLU, Glenn Hale KB7REO, Al Hess KD6DYZ, Ulla Hess K6UDK, Mark Hinds KI7D, Fred Homuth K9GAJ, John Hudrlik KD7TGX, Ken Johnson W7BES, Ruby Mignon KD7ODC, Bob Nelson KD7UHG, Sandy Nelson KD7WYD, Bob Nelson WA3PAD, John Rees KD7QYB, Joe Scanlan N7XSD, Tim Thurman KD7TOK, Paul Webster KC7QJR, Robin Wilmer KD7ODU, and Roy Wilmer K7YWF. Others who volunteered, but because of the lack of 'play' were not deployed, included Gary Hartman KK7LV, Fred Boughton KB2CT, Bill Croghan WB0KSW, Blayne Ence

KG7SS, Steven Goldman N7JAZ, Sharon Goldman KC7TGG, Frank Kostelac N7ZEV, Linda Kostelac KC7IIT, JD Jones N7WL, Larry Simon KC7QJO, and Glenn Tubbesing N7GOT.

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