



NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 2013

Vol 2 No 4, *Exercise Winter Fire Edition*

Exercise WINTER FIRE

Our first annual 'peacetime' field Exercise was held on the weekend of 24 & 25 August, 2013. "Exercise Winter Fire" was an outstanding success, resulting from three months of planning and preparation by volunteers working on drafting and refining a number of Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's) to be used and tested in the Exercise.

And just as occurs in a real world event, the Logistics ("Logs") section was deployed early to "obtain, maintain, sustain" resources and equipment for the event. Logs Manager Emilis Prelgauskas put together everything from finding a Local Control Centre (LCC) near the "fire", to filling the SAVEM Jeep with "patients" sourced from local Op Shops, tagging them with species and injury details, and on the Sunday morning of the Exercise, placing them around the venue in designated "sectors", to be located by SAVEM Operations (Ops) teams in the "fireground".



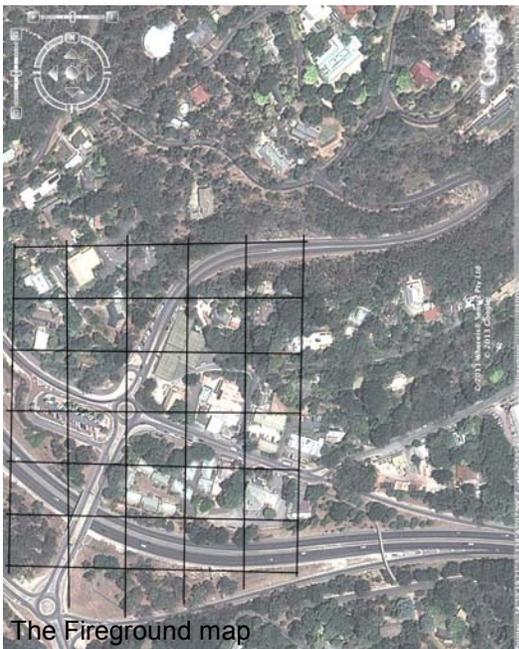
Operations Desk in the Local Control Centre, L-R Emilis Prelgauskas, Carolyn Lewis, Jan (JJ) Jackowiak, Oliver Funnell, Brigitte Pitman, Cathy Kelly & Mary Barton.

As a one day field exercise across a limited physical area, we trialled processes only related to the LCC. This meant we could concentrate on closely scrutinising one aspect of SAVEM's processes really well. In reality, we may have to liaise with the State Control Centre, or the Regional Coordination Centre (RCC), if one was required, integrating back-up of supplies and resources, transport from warehouse, and cycling of personnel, which would be the norm in a longer running action.

Our **AIM** for the Exercise was to practise the SAVEM Plan and SOPs. Our **OBJECTIVES** were to develop skills and knowledge of the drug related, triage, euthanasia and animal identification SOPs; to develop team behaviours; to develop skills in SAVEM roles, and to develop knowledge of the SAVEM Plan.

The exercise was based on the Crafrers Institute building adjacent to Crafrers main street roundabout (see map) Because this 'fireground' comprises public lands, volunteers letter-boxed adjacent households in the preceding week to notify them of the event. Local police and medical centres were advised, and the *Courier* newspaper ran a half-page article about SAVEM.

On Saturday, a refresher Level 1 course was conducted, and volunteers had the opportunity to be reminded about the specific processes to be implemented the next day.



The Fireground map

On Sunday morning the LCC was set up for briefing and to house the Functions of Control, Planning, Operations, Logistics and Public Information. The Logistics team successfully ran a Registry for the first time, assisted by Merridy Montarello's 850g koala joey in care.

Drug dispensing, animal retrieval and admission to hospital were all practised. The teddy bears and friends placed in each sector represented a range of animals including guinea pigs, an emu, a horse, a goat, a kangaroo, dogs, cats, koalas, pet birds and reptiles. We trialled an American triage tag system, which we will modify for our own use, and identified animals euthanased with barbiturates with a "Toxic Hazard" marker (right). One team dreamt up their own conspiracy to test the Drugs SOP, by "losing" some "euthanasia solution" of green cordial.

The good humoured nature of the day was very evident, with lively conversation over lunch.



After lunch we conducted an “After Action Review”, with Field Teams reporting their findings prior to an open floor general discussion, which was rigorous, positive and with the “can do” attitude so essential in Emergency Management.

THANKYOU to the several dozen volunteers who contributed to the preparations, conduct and clean up.

The exercise successfully ran a full LCC with all Functional areas, three field teams and back up recovery activities.

The feedback and learning was excellent. From this we will continue to widen and improve processes. We also now have a dozen and half people with hands on experience. This allows future exercises and activation to be built around a well trained core leadership group, with incoming volunteers able to be mentored as they build their own skill base.



The “patients” awaiting distribution



Operations Field Team “Alpha” in action L-R Bev Langley, Claire Moore (Team Leader), Anna Procyk and Carol Haley

THE SECOND ANNUAL SAVEM WINTER EXERCISE WILL BE HELD IN AUGUST 2014.

THE SAVEM JEEP

An exercise in Awareness and Essential Resources.

SAVEM Inc. sincerely thanks SAFECOM, the Federal Attorney General’s Department, ProVet SA, Internode and Adrian Brien Jeep.



AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

One of the on-going tasks being pursued by our volunteers is distributing information about SAVEM out to diverse sectors in the community.

1. Our first print run of 5000 brochures has been almost depleted over the last nine months, targeting local community groups and individuals. Our volunteers have taken packs of brochures to community events, speaking engagements, schools, veterinary practices, their workplaces, CFS brigades, and incidents such as the Cherryville fire. We thank everyone for contributing to this important way to increase public awareness. Carol Haley is the “chocolate frog” winner by a good length or two for the most SAVEM brochures distributed in any one calendar month!

We are now close to commissioning the second print run. This will be updated to include SAVEM’s own phone number and additional recent sponsors.

2. Early this year our Board began work on an article about our evolution for the *Australian Journal of Emergency Management*, which is published in Canberra by the Federal Attorney-General’s Department, and in August this report was published. In the intervening months, the article evolved into a more academic five page refereed and annotated description of SAVEM’s work and mission.

Please visit: <http://www.em.gov.au/Publications/Australianjournalofemergencymanagement/Currentissue/Pages/28-3-Postdisasterrecoveryarrangementsforanimalsin-SouthAustralia.aspx>

3. *The Veterinarian* magazine sought out information on SAVEM for an August issue article.

4. In the lead up to *Exercise Winter Fire*, the *Mount Barker Courier* published a half page article about us, on August 21.

Once again, enquiries about volunteering come from these efforts, and increasingly from people with existing links to other emergency services.



SAVEM’s TRAINING CONTINUUM

As we evolve, we are able to offer better structured training systems as these develop. In ascending order we currently offer:

1. Volunteer Registration – new volunteers are assigned roles under trained leadership, and encouraged as soon as possible to undertake
2. Level 1 Introductory training, which provides volunteers with a basic understanding of Emergency Management processes
3. Team Leader training open to volunteers with Level 1 training
4. Specialist training modules, such as *Treating Burns*, Fireground Safety and Leadership skills
5. In-field experience reinforces the importance of training (such as SAVEM’s Cherryville response, and discussions with DEWNR about SAVEM being present at controlled burns)
6. Participation in regular meetings such as SOP Development
7. Formal advanced exercise open to volunteers with Level 1 training



SAVEM’s Principal Training Officer, Nancy Bombardieri, explains *Span of Control*, and the magic number “5”, at a Level 1 workshop.

“The purpose of life is a life of purpose”.

Stuart Ellis, AM, Director, Australasian Fire & Emergency Service Authorities Council