



# Debrief

## MAY 2008



The Monthly Newsletter of

### Far North Search & Rescue

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### Next Training - Magical Mystery Weekend

**Where:** Meet at Grants, 51d Hall Rd. Kerikeri

**When:** 1800Hrs Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> May (will be stopping for munchies enroute to top-secret location).

**What:** SAR Daypack (and search gear). Sleeping bag & fluffy pillow. This weekend is fully catered (incl Vegetarian) up to and including dinner Friday night. Overnight accommodation is provided indoors. First 12 have seats in the van, other vehicles may carpool to make up convoy. Open minds, inquisitive personalities, a hint of Sherlock Holmes and a large slice of enthusiasm will create masterful SAR delight! This will be as close to a real search as you can get without it being a real search.

**Who:** Everyone who can make it please. Need the numbers for this to work well. Returning to Kerikeri early-Mid afternoon Sunday.

**Please contact Sue ASAP to advise attendance status if you haven't already.**

### Next Meeting 7:30pm June 4th Kaikohe HQ

HQ Located in Police station compound. Access first left off Clifford Rd from Broadway.

### Standbys and Callouts

13/04/08 - Callout - Charter vessel "Pursuit" 9POB on rocks, North Cape  
- Stood down after vessel freed and under tow about 4Hrs after grounding.

This edited account of the grounding comes from a passenger on board - Thanks go to Graham McKenzie for permission to use.

"...Anyway from my perspective and not to be taken as gospel this is the way I saw it. We arrived at Mangonui to news that the forecast was saying 25-30 NW moderating with perhaps a bounce on Wednesday back to 25kn N. Monday. OK Tuesday and Thursday, Friday. Great.

Three plans were put forward

- 1) Go to Karikari and sit and watch
- 2) Go round the top and fish the west coast for the first 2 days
- 3) Go up and sit in Tom Bowling or Spirits and see what happened ready to trundle up to the kings Monday arvo or early Tuesday.

Upon arriving at the cape it was thought that with the amount of north in the wind under the light house would be the best bet. We were anchored up in 8m of water in fairly flat conditions by 3pm had a wee fish for livies and started to sort tea.

Just after dark we were surprised by a bump and quickly saw that we had sailed forward (not swung) into some rocks.



Winding in the anchor, it simply skidded across the surface never getting a bite to pull us back. Rick tried very briefly to back out. A gamble for sure but had it paid off we would have been away with minimal damage. This was not the case and we shut down. The boat then settled in what appeared to be a channel between two rocks with the bow hard on the stony beach.

My heart went out to Rick as he endured feeling his beloved boat thumping in the surge and that was all it was for the next 3 hours or so.

The tide still had 2hrs to fall so we sat and waited as Geoff Lamond was making all speed up from Houhora to attempt to pull us off. Think heavy was the call to assist the boat to settle till the tide rose again.

Rick then informed us that they were going to airlift us off by chopper. Now my knees began to knock a little louder but I gathered some stuff (smokes 2 lighters my wallet and cellphone) and put them all on a ziplock bag. I casually asked who was going first and was stunned when the others all pointed at me saying "If they can get you up there, we will be cool to follow".

5 nervous piddles later I was happy to see them fly away with out a trial lift since I was to be that lift.

"Outer Limits" arrived and after connecting a tow line to the stern we lightened ship removing all the water in the bait tanks and all the nearly 1 tonne of ice. With OL motors ticking over we settled in to wait for the tide and surge to lift us off. Quicker than I would have thought I felt the first movement confirmed by watching the big rock 5m off our beam sliding past.

After that first shift the next became bigger and bigger till we were bobbing in the swell very normally.

Tow rope attached to the bow we headed back under tow to Houhora. Nowcast (Weather) had the wind at 45kn at Cape Maria and we certainly had all of that at times. By now it was 11.30 or thereabouts and to say the tow down was not pleasant for me at least would be a massive understatement.

Very happy campers to be tied up at the Houhora wharf at 6.30 the next morning.

A slow drive home as we were a pretty tired team with many TXTs to answer.

Special mention of the way Rick maintained his demeanour in extremely difficult circumstances. A credit to his professionalism and that of his crew member Zane.

Huge ups to Geoff Lamond and his team on Outer Limits their boat handling and efforts were simply first class especially when they had to reattach the broken tow rope 1 mile off Mt Camel

All in all an interesting experience that none of us would like to repeat."

### **Last Training – Team Building Tramp - Puketi Forest 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> May**

A good turnout, and pleasing to see some new faces. Two teams formed up, with T1 consisting of newer members accompanied by Pete as local knowledge and were to navigate across a ridge consisting of an amorphous collection of knolls and basins – saturated with tantalisingly easy trapping lines and associated blazes, but which quickly lead the unwary astray. Having successfully reached the end of this ridge, the route then plummeted down a knife-edge ridge into the Puketi river, and at camp by dark. Simple.

Team 2 had the unenviable and daunting task of following established tracks along another couple of ridges before also entering the river section and making their way to the campsite...T1 asked them to put the kettle on as we were unlikely to reach camp before them ☺

This is Team twos version of the story...

Nice pleasant jaunt on day one with only a little windfall on the first track. Lovely trip down the well maintained Pukatea Ridge and into the river. The taller members of the group stayed mostly dry, but I heard some oohing and aahing from the shorter troops when the water reached the knicker line! Met up with some



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pig hunters, but couldn't convince them to swap places on their nice dry horse legs, so had to keep in the river for a while, avoiding the kindly left pig guts (which look like they would provide great buoyancy should you want to make a raft). Made it to camp on dusk – great company and beautiful river side vista but in terms of the actual campsite I think the real estate brochures would harp on the “vista” and perhaps state drainage work might be required! Wonderful wet walk out Sunday morning with first hand experience of why horse riders and trampers don't mix well on the same tracks, well not for the trampers anyway! Anyway it was fun playing with the ropes to get us up the mud slides! Can't wait for the next trip!



Going In



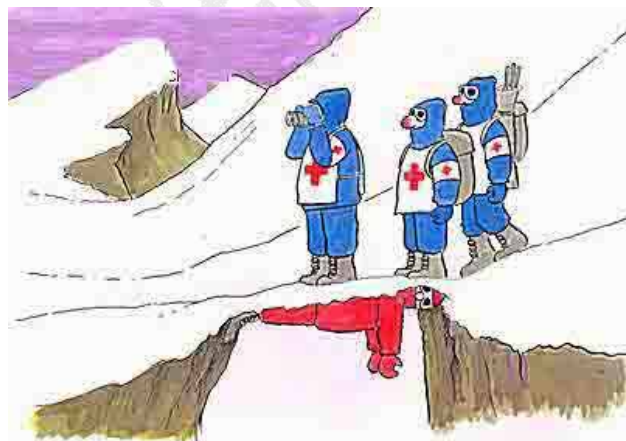
And 24Hrs Later...

Coming out, and still smiling!  
(Must get myself a waterproof camera!)

### Parting Shot

#### Ten Rules of Tracking:

- 1) Never track alone (you have nobody else to blame)
- 2) Three is the best size for a tracking team (you'll contaminate less area when you get lost and wander)
- 3) Never place a marker on the ground (you may have to explain what you marked)
- 4) Always have a "spare" guaranteed LP trail handy (you may get stumped by the one you are following)
- 5) Never be the first person on-scene. (you'll have to find the first print)
- 6) Always travel light (leave your raingear, torch, mirror, water and insect repellent in the car)
- 7) Don't lean on a 5mm dowel tracking stick (you will get a 5mm diameter splinter)
- 8) Never attend an overnight training without earplugs (the classmates next to you will snore)
- 9) You are having a bad day when the best cut you make is one from bush lawyer.
- 10) As a tracker, you will always be the last to be deployed, and then into the most contaminated areas.



See you at Rogers' Magical Mystery Weekend

*Cheers!*

*Pete*

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Many thanks to our supporters: **Kerikeri Outdoor Shop & Glengarry Hancocks Wines, Auckland.** 3