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SUFFOLK RESILIENCE FORUM

NUCLEAR WEAPONS EMERGENCY EXERCISE

EXERCISE "DIAMOND DRAGON" REPORT



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15th October 2015**

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This appendix is removed from the public version of this report.

FOI Section 36 - Prejudice to effective conduct of public affairs and Section 43 - Commercial interests and FOI Section 36 - Prejudice to effective conduct of public affairs.

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GLOSSARY

Abbreviation/Term	Description
AWE	Atomic Weapons Establishment
CCR	Police Contact and Control Room
CCS	Civil Contingencies Secretariat
COBR	Cabinet Office Briefing Rooms - national response
DCLG	Department for Communities and Local Government
DEFRA	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
DPH	Director of Public Health – part of County Council
ECC	Emergency Control Centre
FCP	Forward Command Post
FSA	Food Standards Agency
GOLD	The strategic command and control role which sets emergency response policy and strategy for individual responder agencies
JDM	Joint Decision Model
JEPU	Joint Emergency Planning Unit
JESIP	Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Procedure
JOC	MOD Joint Operations Centre
JRLO	Joint Regional Liaison Officer – UK Armed Forces
L3	Level 3
MOD	Ministry of Defence
PHE	Public Health England
PHE - CRCE	Public Health England - Centre for Radiation, Chemicals and Environmental Hazards
RAFRLO	RAF Regional Liaison Officer
RD	Resilience Direct – internet based information sharing platform
SCG	Strategic Coordinating Group - part of StratCC. This where individual agency GOLD's work together.
SIMPRESS	Simulated Press
SitReps	Situation Report
SILVER	Individual agency tactical level commander
SRF	Suffolk Resilience Forum
StratCC	Strategic Coordination Centre - local response
STAC	Scientific and Technical Advice Cell - part of StratCC
TacAD	Tactical Advisor (emergency services)
TCG	Tactical Coordinating Group – local response
WOW	Working on Wednesdays – fortnightly multi-agency working day

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Exercise DIAMOND DRAGON was a MoD Level 3 exercise designed to test the response to an emergency involving US nuclear weapons within the UK. The main exercise date for Suffolk Resilience Forum (SRF) participation was on 30 June 2015; a second day, 1 July 2015, was also supported by the SRF but largely through contingency planners. The last exercise of these arrangements was Ex DIMMING SUN in 2003.

1.2 The main exercise on 30 June 2015 was a field training exercise for the MoD and US military participants supported by a command post type exercise at the strategic and tactical coordination levels, run in exercise time to allow multiple response functions to be tested during the day. The exercise for local emergency responders started at 0900hrs on 30 June 2015 and finished at 1700hrs.

1.3 The follow up exercise on 1 July 2015 was a military command post event located at RAF Honington. It was aimed at practising UK and US military command and control at the operational level. Police, Fire, Ambulance, Public Health England - Centre for Radiation, Chemicals and Environmental Hazards (PHE-CRCE), Local Authorities and RAFRLO provided a simulated Strategic Coordinating Group (SCG) and Tactical Coordinating Group (TCG) input and advice on civil emergency activities.

1.4 A notification exercise took place at 1300hrs on 25 March 2015. The MOD Joint Operations Centre (JOC) notified the emergency services via telephone using a test message. This was also then disseminated by the Police to Suffolk local authorities via the JEPUs.

1.5 The Local Exercise Instruction, issued on 28 April 2015, provided information, instructions and details of the event to allow preparation of local emergency response agencies and associated infrastructure needed to support the exercise. This document complemented the main Players' Exercise Instruction issued by the MoD on 21 May 2015 which detailed the wider UK and US military activities in relation to the exercise and provided detail on the exercise scenario.

1.6 Recommendations and detailed learning points from this report will be taken forward by the Suffolk Resilience Forum, as appropriate, to the main MOD debrief. Where local responder arrangements used for other civil emergency risks require improvement, these will be taken forward through the Suffolk Resilience Forum to sustain coherence of local emergency arrangements.

2 EXERCISE OUTCOMES

2.1 Aim.

To support the MoD test of arrangements for responding to an emergency involving US nuclear weapons in the UK.

2.2 Objectives.

Local Strategic:

- a. To practice emergency response to nuclear weapons emergency in Suffolk.

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- b. To exercise interaction with simulated central government emergency response arrangements.

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- c. To practice interaction with UK and US military emergency responders.

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Enabling:

- d. To exercise notification arrangements for a nuclear weapons emergency. This will take place on 25 March 2015.

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- e. To exercise local arrangements for the operation of the Strategic Coordination Centre (StratCC), including Media Briefing Centre (MBC), Media Coordination Cell (MCC) and Scientific and Technical Advice Cell (STAC).

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- f. To exercise arrangements for the operation of the Tactical Coordinating Group (TCG).

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- g. To exercise operational joint interoperability arrangements at the incident scene, including operations with UK and US military.

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- h. To exercise the development and provision of information to the media and the public.

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- i. To practice communications interfaces between local emergency coordination structures and individual Emergency Control Centres (ECC)/national emergency management rooms.

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- j. To practice the decision making process for the implementation of public protection measures.

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3. ASSESSMENT AND OBSERVATIONS

3.1 Overview of Key Learning Points.

Positive

- The approach and attitude of participants was excellent with individuals and teams engaging fully and in a positive manner.
- There was plenty of evidence of good, solid and highly effective professional work at both individual and team level in all locations.
- The StratCC was established quickly and effectively, driven by a core of competent and very able staff.
- The SCG meetings were effectively chaired and managed very well.
- Lessons Identified on a previous exercise (Ex EAGLE) about the functioning and leadership of the STAC had been implemented and the STAC ran more effectively.
- Use of Resilience Direct to support multi-agency information sharing and situational awareness was effective.

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- The SCG produced timely multiagency SitReps in the new national format using Resilience Direct and were passed via DCLG to national crisis management levels
- Recovery activity was considered at an early stage and considered many initial areas of activity.
- The communications and press activity, including social media, was well managed and effective.

Negative

- Levels of participation by agencies varied across agencies leading to unrealistic exercise play at the operational level.
- Starting all levels of coordination at the same time slowed the initial response at the operational level due to unrealistic inputs being placed upon Operational Commanders from higher levels.
- Multi-agency strategy and objectives from SCG meetings could have been clearer and more concise.
- Forward Command Post (FCP) meetings were too large leading to delays in the decision making, planning and implementation of the response activity
- STAC need to make more time critical decisions to improve effectiveness of the response and to be more visible with collocated multi-agency strategic commanders. A route for TCG requests for advice needs to be established.
- The TCG location was too small and noisy.
- JESIP training has not been rolled out to staff who are likely to be the initial responders at the scene.

3.2 SRF Recommendations for National Consideration.

Rec 1. **Consider use of civil nuclear accident notification approach.**

Combined Fire Control had difficulties in understanding the initial information passed to them by the Joint Operations Centres (JOC). The civil nuclear emergency response area has a well-tested procedure that could be adopted by the military to ensure relevant information needed by the emergency services is provided in a standard, easily understood format.

Action: AWE / MOD to consider revising the initial JOC notification procedure using civil nuclear emergency response notification practice.

Rec 2. **National Guidance on Completion of the Situation Report (SitRep)**

The national SitRep template was used in Suffolk for the first time and was considered to be an improvement on previous reporting formats. It was however unclear to agencies as to what level of information was required in the SitRep. As the document is intended to give a consolidated picture of the situation to COBR and other central government departments, as well as to local responding agencies, more detailed national guidance is required on the completion of the form to ensure all LRFs are reporting similar core information at the same level of detail.

Action: CCS / DCLG to consider providing clarification on the core areas and level of detail to be reported in the SitRep form.

Rec 3. **Use of Plain English or the Terms in the Civil Contingencies Lexicon**

Ex DIAMOND DRAGON involved a wide range of different agencies, including US personnel, all bringing with them their own terminology and acronyms. To ensure a clear understanding by all participating agencies the use of plain English, or as a minimum, the terms listed in the Civil Contingencies Lexicon should be used.

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Action: AWE / MoD to consider how terminology is used in incident and exercises to avoid misunderstanding; the preference should be to use plain English only.

Rec 4. **FSA / DEFRA Advice on Food and Water Consumption**

Information given during the exercise by FSA / DEFRA on the consumption of locally sourced food and drinking water was unhelpful as it was standard advice that did not take into account available technical information relating to the actual hazard from the incident.

Action: FSA/DEFRA advice on food and water measures should be hazard based to avoid such measures from being applied disproportionately.

Rec 5. **Future Exercise Approach for MOD Nuclear Response**

Ex DIAMOND DRAGON highlighted missed opportunities to more robustly test integrated emergency arrangements between the US / UK military and the civilian emergency responders at the operational level during a military nuclear incident. The operational play was hampered by all the levels of coordination being in play from the onset and the arrival of the specialist responders within an unrealistic time. The JESIP process, used by the civilian emergency services, requires that on receipt of new information the Joint Decision Model (JDM) is reassessed, with additional technical advice being input to the scene from the start of the live play this did not allow the initial responders to do their dynamic risk assessment and carry out immediate response activities using the information they had at the time.

Action: AWE / MOD to consider a time delay, 2 hours, before higher levels of command, control and coordination become active in future exercises to allow the initial immediate response to take place without unrealistic intervention.

Rec 6. **Access to Hazard Information for Military Aircraft by Civil Response Agencies**

The lack of easily accessible information on the hazards presented by the various types of military aircraft hampered the initial responders on the scene from making an informed risk assessment, resulting in a delay to the response. This information is available and can be shared before any emergency with the emergency services.

Action: MOD to consider sharing hazard data for military air frames via Resilience Direct for use by UK emergency services.

Rec 7. **Declaration by MOD of a Level 3 exercise to other Government Departments**

Limited numbers of players from some agencies caused confusion during the live play phase, eg no physical presence of Police officers around the whole cordon allowing elements from the SIMPRESS to approach the incident scene. In order to secure maximum involvement by all agencies in future exercises of this scale, consideration needs to be given to adding the exercise onto the Central Government exercise programme which will allow release of greater resources, particularly from local responders.

Action: MOD to consider agreeing future L3 exercises as part of the Central Government exercise programme.

3.3 SRF Recommendations for Local Response Arrangements.

Rec 8. Revised Protocols for the use of Resilience Direct in Response.

The use of Resilience Direct (RD), including the mapping function, on the day allowed National and local Command and Control facilities to share information and have improved situational awareness during the exercise. This was the first time that we had exercised using Resilience Direct and the experience was positive, we need to learn from the experience and to refine and improve the protocols and procedures.

Action: SRF Partnership Manager in conjunction with the SRF RD Working Group to review protocols in light of the learning from using the response side of RD and then deliver RD training for local responders.

Rec 9. Completion and Timing of the SitRep

The use of the SitRep to inform the SCG meeting about the operational situation is beneficial to reduce the meeting time and to ensure there is a record of operational activities at prescribed times during the course of the incident. The mechanism for obtaining the information and the timings of its presentation need to be explored further following the exercise. It is accepted that the TCG should have a closer understanding of the operational situation and should therefore initiate the bulk of the report to the SCG representation who then completes and submits their section to the SCG Information Management Staff. The timing of the report and the currency of the information in it needs to be determined early in the Battle Rhythm to enable agencies to compile the report in a timely fashion.

Action: SRF Partnership Manager through SRF Working on Wednesdays (WOW) to review the completion process for the SitRep to align better with SCG and TCG Battle Rhythm.

Rec 10. Review of TCG Agenda

The TCG agenda was considered too strategic for use during the TCG meetings.

Action: SRF partnership Manager to review the TCG agenda through SRF WOW and update SRF TCG Guidance.

Rec 11. Initial SCG situational briefing

There was initial confusion over who would be the most appropriate person to give initial situational briefing to SCG. In light of the fact that most current information is being received by the Emergency Services Control Rooms, the initial SCG briefing should be given by the Police.

Action: Amend the SRF StratCC Guidance to confirm a Police lead for the 1st SCG situation briefing.

Rec 12. STAC Working Arrangements

STAC members felt isolated from the rest of the multi-agency working due to the door between the Multi-Agency Room and the STAC being closed. Previous exercises, where the door had been open, lead to difficulties in controlling requests for information to the STAC. Agencies, including those situated in the TCG and Media Coordination Cell, were unclear as to whom to get technical advice from, direct from STAC or from the PHE representative in the Multi-Agency Room.

Actions: PHE / DPH to:

- Review the STAC working procedures, to consider conducting specific STAC meetings in the SCG room, in between SCG and RCG meetings, and using the current STAC Room (Room 1) as a working room for STAC members so they are accessible to the other agencies.
- Identify a procedure for requesting advice to be introduced and included in the SRF StratCC Guidance for use by all agencies in all coordination locations (e.g. TCG / Media).

Rec 13. Representation in the Multi-Agency Rooms at the SCG and TCG

The lack of the correct representation, for instance a Police representative in the multi-agency room at the SCG, does not conform to the JESIP principles and did not promote multi-agency discussions in between SCG meetings to take place within the room.

Police SILVER would have benefited from co location with Fire, Ambulance and possibly the military at the tactical level as well as operational levels in order to conform to the JESIP principles and to ensure coordination of activities relating to consequence management with the other agencies.

Action: Police to update SRF StratCC Guidance to confirm Police strategic presence in multiagency room during Major Incidents

Rec 14. Further embedding JESIP principles

With the introduction of JESIP, a documented process for decision making has been standardised for the Emergency Services, each Emergency Service should expand the training requirement to include rank and file staff likely to be the first responders on the scene. Training on the Joint Decision Model should also be offered to the supporting agencies and members of STAC who are likely to be present at one of the multi-agency coordination levels, this will help to emphasise the need for time-critical advice from all levels during an incident to ensure a timely response.

Actions: SRF to consider how JESIP training can be made available to staff who are likely to be involved at the operational, tactical and strategic levels, including those who are likely to be present in the STAC.

4. EXERCISE PLANNING FEEDBACK

4.1 Scenario Planning.

The scenario was based upon a reasonably foreseeable scenario given the designation of RAF Lakenheath as a receiving airfield to accept this type of payload in an emergency and the overflights of the area.

4.2 Exercise Management.

The exercise was facilitated by a dedicated team from AWE and from the Suffolk Resilience Forum. The MOD nuclear emergency response operational elements were assessed by the Defence Nuclear Safety Regulator (DSNR). UK civil emergency response and national elements were not be assessed as part of the exercise but would contribute to the ability of the MOD to pass their assessment.

Activities at the Strategic Coordination Centre were observed on the day by members from ONR in

order for Suffolk to demonstrate on improvement on information management and the focus of the SCG and STAC.

4.3 Observers

A large number of observers were accepted for the exercise but at times these people inadvertently distracted exercise players.

Consideration should be given to limiting the number of observers at exercises.