

DATE: 29 September 2008

SUBJECT: After Action Report – 3C Support Exercise/ Blue Eagle Response Exercise 9  
27 2008

FROM: Bob Hollister, CC RACES Officer, DEC  
TO: Mike Evans, CC Emergency Services Director  
INFO: RACES Members

### 1. PURPOSE:

This report briefly describes the support provided by the Cochise County RACES Communications Unit to the Cochise County Blue Eagle Response Exercise and the 3C Support Exercise conducted on September 27, 2008. Primary objectives of this exercise were to simultaneously activate the "Preassigned" RACES locations within the county, test RACES activation procedures and support the 3C Support exercise.

### 2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The RACES team was initially placed on "stand by" via page at approximately 1900L on Friday, September 26, 2008 and was again formally "paged out" at 0800L on Saturday, September 27, 2008 to directly support the 3-County Assisted Living Center Evacuation Drill being conducted in Pima County and indirectly the Blue Eagle Response Exercise. The Cochise County RACES involvement with the 3-County Exercise was to provide Controller communications with Pima County exercise locations and the Cochise County Volunteer Reception Center established at the Health Department facility on Foothills in Sierra Vista. The Blue Eagle Response Exercise was conducted concurrently to test the equipment and operations from the Blue Eagle locations and provide additional exercise input if appropriate. Participating Blue Eagle locations and other RACES participants are identified below.

### 3. LESSONS LEARNED/ISSUES

RACES PAGERS/CALL TREE– The RACES pager system was only marginally functional for all aspects of this exercise. A few RACES members did receive the standby and activation pages, however, most living in Sierra Vista and Bisbee did NOT receive the pages. Contact with the paging company will be made as soon as possible to attempt to determine why a large number of pagers did not activate. The paging company recently relocated some of their mountaintop equipment and it is possible that one or more of the paging sites is not operating correctly or at full efficiency. Unfortunately the Call Tree did not get exercised when the pager system failed. City Officers need to revisit and update their call trees as a backup for the times when the Pager does not work plus cover those members who do not have pagers. Alternates need to be named when the primary is not available due to travel or other reasons. I feel the failure of the Pager system severely impacted our overall participation levels.

EOC HF ANTENNA – During a visual "check" of the HF antenna system at the Cochise County Sheriff's Office by the Bisbee City Officer it was noted immediately that one end of the HF antenna was no longer connected at one end of the support structure and that the center PVC pipe support did not appear to be where it was originally installed. A minimal check of the Icom IC756PROII radio showed that there was still a feed point Balun probably connected to the coaxial feed line but that the antenna was beyond what was visible was probably grounded out. Without access to the roof it was impossible to actually see whether the antenna has snapped in two (probable) or if it has just pulled loose from one end and the center support structures. This is a critical failure and should be corrected as quickly as possible because this impacts our primary ability to communicate with the State EOC and the EOCs located in outlying counties via HF radio. Upon completion of the repair or replacement, the Bisbee City Officer (Ev Wittig) should be notified so that testing can be conducted and ensure that the radio and antenna system are again fully functional.

BLUE EAGLE "STANDBY" OPERATORS - After going through the basic list and checking available Blue Eagle assignments, the NCS apparently did not make a call for standby operators. At least that was the perception of at least one operator. Consequently a roster of available "standby operators" was not prepared for additional assignments that may have been required. Alternative wording should be added to the roster to ensure that this step is completed.

END OF MISSION CLEANUP – A couple housekeeping tips, we are not consistently emptying the coffee pot after missions are completed or emptying the trash from the trash can or the truck cab. I know have been guilty of that a couple times. Additionally, the ACU Rack power supply was left turned on.

#### 4. GENERAL COMMENTS

Both the pager issue and the HF antenna issue noted above should be classified as critical items that need to be addressed in a timely fashion in order for the RACES organization to be fully capable in the event of an actual emergency. Overall the exercise met its training objectives and identified a number areas for remediation, both at the individual and unit level.

During this exercise we were using almost exclusively the amateur frequencies, It would have been convenient to have been able to monitor a couple of the amateur channels on the LE radios. We were maxed out on available amateur radios and would have liked to be able to monitor two additional channels. Suggest a basic load of RACES/ CARA/ HELIO/ SKYWARN be added to the Motorola and Tait radios if channels are available to expand our basic capability.

Electrical shore power was available for this event at the Foothills location. We did not think to bring the cable with us. We normally just leave it at the club facility. Some advanced scouting could have saved some generator "juice" on this event. Granted, it

was only a 20 amp circuit and we could not have used the air conditioner, but we could have run everything else we were using.

## 5. ACTION ITEMS

- Contact Pager Vendor to check and repair any malfunctions found in RACES Pager System
- Work with Emergency Services and IT to get the HF antenna repaired or replaced
- Add block to Blue Eagle Matrix to specifically address "stand by" operators

## Attachment – Participants

### RACES Team

Bob Hollister – Communications Coordinator  
Ev Wittig – CCSO EOC Net Control Station (NCS)  
Grant Hays - Green Acres HF Site & Alternate Net Control Station  
Dale Chidester - MCU  
Roger Peters – MCU/Driver  
Mike McNeill - Benson Hospital  
Barb Heck - Douglas SEAMC Hospital  
Juanita Portz - SV Police Dept.  
Mike Bales - SV Police Dept.  
RB Rice – FT Huachuca/SV Regional Health Center (Comm at SVRHC was successfully conducted earlier in the week)  
Richard Homer - Tombstone Marshal's Office/Fire  
Tom Huntoon – SAR Command Post (Willcox)  
Charles Campbell – Alternate MCU Operator  
Wendell Carter  
Jack Hunter  
Robert Kappler  
Richard Hotchkiss

Bob  
Robert L Hollister

Thought for the day:

*"Sometimes I think the surest sign that intelligent life exists elsewhere in the universe is that none of it has tried to contact us."*

Calvin & Hobbes