

Lancaster County Emergency Readiness Drill Operation Tsunami - 2018

Expectations: First exercise for N1WR as lead. We have a small group and we hoped that the exercise would generate interest. It did! We needed to get Winlink established as THE medium for messaging.

What actually took place: We set up at the Emergency managers headquarters - HQ (we don't have a permanent EOC). We had a portable station set up in the back of a WW II truck, HF Winlink and VHF on our C&C channel - all this with a portable HF antenna outside HQ. We used KK4NTE HF RMS throughout the exercise. We had wifi connection to the printer in HQ for transfer of incoming traffic. Outgoing traffic was sneaker net. We had three home stations taking turns, operating as Lancaster County liaisons on the HF SSB net. Traffic from the HF net was relayed on the C&C channel. Net control for the C&C net was at HQ. Our VHF Winlink RMS was out of service for the exercise, unfortunately.

What went well and why: HF Winlink was 100% reliable. Our EM was impressed by our ability to get messages exchanged. We got some much needed training. A great opportunity to practice, show the county what we can do. It also helped to build comradery amongst the group.

What can be improved and how:

Simplex operation – We could not contact the at home liaison stations via simplex. We need an elevated 2 meter antenna for simplex operation so we can move verbal message traffic off the Command and Control channel.

HF Winlink – we should have an effective HF antenna installed so that we can operate HF Winlink from the EOC.

VHF Winlink – We need a reliable 2 meter packet Winkink station set up –preferably two for redundancy.

We were unable to establish a liaison station on the Williamsburg repeater. We could possibly do this from one of our home stations, but it would be better to have an antenna at the EOC high enough to reach the 146.76 repeater in Williamsburg. VDEM EOC monitors this repeater.

Equipment checkout – e.g. printer had dried up ink cartridges, should have been checked prior to operation.

Printing messages – we don't know how to print them in ICS-213 format.

We should have simulated setting up a remote station at a shelter. We would need VHF voice and VHF Winlink.

Exercise: The contact list - should have a separate listing of key contacts - like who is the VEOC sim station, who is Red cross primary contact, etc - difficult to get from the long listing of participants'

Our Manual needs a better contact list for real time events.

Our Ops Manual – need to add 60 Meter freqs. Also memories in FT-991 need to be programmed.

Exercise: More/better 'all stations' broadcasts - to advise about what is the current condition/status. We didn't know when we went from the before Tsunami to after Tsunami.

Exercise: Initial prep assumed we were not in the affected area. We most certainly would have been. This, unfortunately is a factor for us in general - We in the Northern Neck are a small, less populated area but in a very vulnerable location - subject to flooding and hurricane damage. In Virginia the big counties (e.g. tidewater area) get all of the attention and support. Good example - take a look at the VA evacuation map. they didn't consider that we in the Northern Neck have a significant population to evacuate! Rte 3 should be on that map!

Exercise: The SSB net - We could hear it in the beginning, but totally lost comm, didn't know that the net was moved to 40M, and also found out very late tht it was moved to 60M. It was not useful for communications.

Exercise: Time format on Winlink messages. Some stations were using UTC. I believe we should all stick to locl time. We, as hams might be OK with UTC, but the people we interface with speak local time. We all need to agree, one way or another. Times on winlink messages don't include the time zone designation.

Exercise: We didn't think there were sufficient injects to us.

Exercise: From our perspective/viewpoint we had no perspective on who was participating. It would have been nice to have some kind of periodic roll call, one way might be similar to how we do it for Winlink Wednesday.

Participants:

N1WR COMML	12 hours prep, 5 hours operation
W1FDY HF SSB Liaison Station	5 hours operation
W3UAL HF SSB Liaison station	5 hours operation
N4RWC HF SSB Liaison Station, W3JW operator	5 hours operation
KN4AIT Net Control C&C Net	8 hours prep, 5 hours operation
KN4KMD HF Winlink station operator	5 hours operation
KE3GM Observer	2 hours operation
AJ4OA Assistant COMML	3 hours operation
Terry McGregor, Lancaster County EM	3 hours prep, 5 hours operation
Rachael Waldron,ESF-17, CERT Lead	5 hours operation
W4GSF EOC, Lancaster County	

W4GSF/R Lancaster Repeater

KN4AIT provided vehicle for HF Winlink station

Winlink Message Traffic Counts: Sent – 12, Received – 15

Signed, Wayne Rogers, N1WR COMML