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OCEAN GUARDIAN

II

September 13 - 14, 2005

Evaluation Report

Canada 

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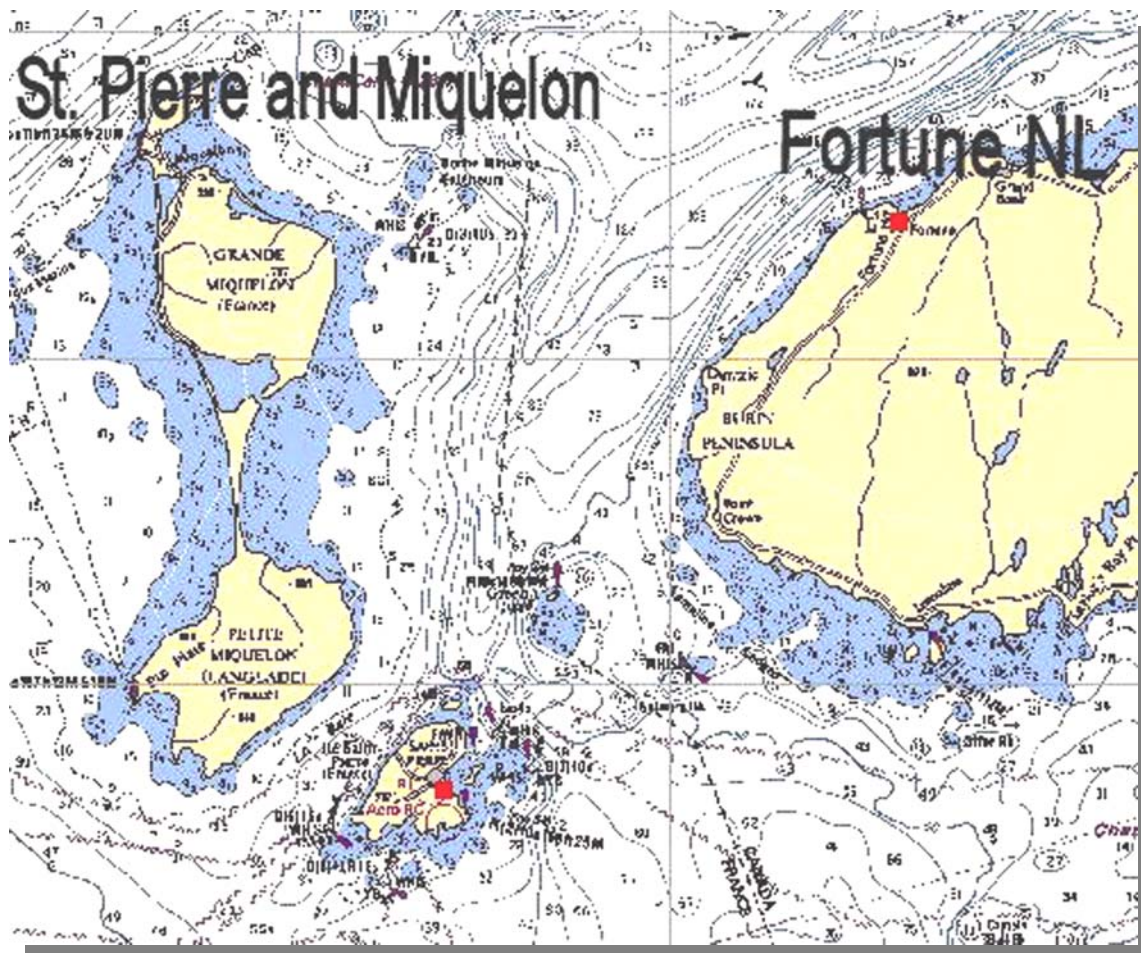
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Section 1 - Introduction

Ocean Guardian II was a marine security and response exercise conducted on and off shore in Newfoundland and Labrador on September 13th and 14th, 2005. This exercise was designed to test the various elements of a terrorist attack at sea on board a small passenger ferry and the response that would be mobilized as a result of an attack. This report will outline the agencies involved in Ocean Guardian II, the exercise planning, execution of the exercise, as well as lessons learned and recommendations for future mock disasters.

Interviews and recommendations were conducted post exercise to contribute to the overall success of the evaluation process.





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Section 2 - Participatory Agencies

There were many federal, provincial and municipal agencies involved in Ocean Guardian II. This section of the report lists all participants and gives a brief description of their operational mandates.

The Canadian Coast Guard: The Canadian Coast Guard is the lead federal agency that co-chaired the Ocean Guardian Exercise II. The Coast Guard is charged with responding to all disasters or emergencies at sea. This agency is paramount in Newfoundland and Labrador due to the large amount of activity taking place in the waters around the province and, therefore, engages itself in Search and Rescue exercises throughout the year.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police: The RCMP presence within the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador co-chaired this marine security and Search and Rescue cooperation exercise with the Canadian Coast Guard. The RCMP is Canada's federal police force and is mandated to enhance safe communities and to build partnerships with other agencies in the area involved in responding to disasters. The RCMP also provides policing to the Grand Bank area under the Provincial Police Services Agreement.

Public Safety and Emergency Planning Canada, Emergency Management National Security Branch: PSEPC-EMNS is the federal agency mandated with "protecting Canadians and helping to maintain a peaceful and safe society"¹. This agency also works with provincial and local administrators for training activities such as exercises, and workshops. PSEPC provides federal representation at all disasters and preparedness exercises throughout the province.

The Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary: The CCGA is a volunteer organization intended as a supplement to the Canadian Coast Guard. The organization is comprised of professional mariners able to aid in responding to emergency events on the water. The CCGA is a non-profit organization.

The Department of Fisheries and Oceans: DFO is the federal agency in charge of the "management of oceans and freshwater resources" in Canada². DFO provides media relations services for the Canadian Coast Guard, as was their role in the Ocean Guardian II exercise.

Canadian Border Security Agency: CBSA is the federal body in charge of regulating those persons and effects that enter and exit Canada's borders. As Newfoundland is a coastal entry point to Canada, CBSA is present on many of the island's ports. The

¹ www.psepc.gc.ca

² www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca



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Canadian Border Security Agency is present on the wharf in Fortune and must document all people and items entering from St. Pierre and screen for illicit persons or goods.

The Canadian Security Intelligence Service: CSIS is the federal agency that provides intelligence and threat assessment to the Government of Canada and police on any matter that constitutes a threat to the security of Canada. Such information is available through the CSIS Threat Assessment Center.

The Department of National Defence: The DND 103 Search and Rescue Squadron based in Gander participated in Ocean Guardian II. This agency provides the air component of Search and Rescue operations with the Canadian Coast Guard.

The 5th Canadian Rangers Patrol Group: The Canadian Rangers are an auxiliary group meant to assist the Canadian military. This group consists of part-time volunteers who provide military assistance in remote areas and provide services such as assisting in disaster response.

The Department of Health and Community Services: This is Newfoundland and Labrador's provincial health authority and is made up of 14 regional boards. The department has a leadership role in the development of health and community services programs throughout Newfoundland and Labrador and partners within regional boards to provide high standards of health care in the province.

Transport Canada: This is the federal agency charged with administering Canada's transportation systems. Transport Canada works to "...develop and administer policies, regulations and services for the best transportation system for Canada and Canadians"³.

Public Works and Government Services Canada: Public Works is the federal department that services the needs of all the other federal agencies. This agency provides a myriad of services; from acquiring military uniforms to provision of office supplies. In Ocean Guardian II, Public Works was responsible for Internet set-up and maintenance.

The Eastern School District: The Eastern School District, one of five in Newfoundland and Labrador, encompasses 125 schools. The School District was involved in Ocean Guardian II by allowing students from schools in Grand Bank and Fortune to come to the Emergency Operations Center and observe the activities taking place there.

The participation of the Office of Boating Safety was part of the program to promote maritime safety awareness to 8th grade students across Newfoundland and Labrador.

³ www.tc.gc.ca



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Peninsula Health Care Corporation: The PHCC is the regional representation of the provincial health care services for the Burin Peninsula of Newfoundland. This group maintains and administers all health facilities in that area. Located in the vicinity of the exercise, PHCC runs the Grand Bank Community Health Centre, which offers 24-hour emergency medical services and has four 24-hour observational beds.

The Canadian Red Cross: The Red Cross is an international organization that provides numerous services in disaster situations. In Newfoundland and Labrador, this agency provides services under contract to the province through the Department of Human Resources, Labour, and Employment. The Red Cross "...works with government and other humanitarian organizations to provide for people's basic needs..." when emergencies arise⁴. This organization has four main offices in the province and has assisted in delivering emergency provisions to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians on numerous occasions.

The Salvation Army: The Salvation Army is an international Christian Church. It serves in 111 countries throughout the world. Its message is based on the Bible; its ministry is motivated by love for God and the needs of humanity. It began its work in Canada in 1882 as a Christian movement with an acute social conscience. With more than 120 years of experience, The Salvation Army is the largest provider of Social Services in Canada outside of Government, and included in its mandate is Emergency and Disaster Services. At times of disaster, whether it is through providing food, clothing, pastoral services, counseling, or a listening ear, this organization has endeavored to be there when people are caused to suffer.

The Newfoundland and Labrador Emergency Measures Organization: NLEMO is the provincial body responsible for disaster response in Newfoundland and Labrador. This agency works to coordinate and liaise between various agencies to provide resources that may be necessary for an emergency response.

Department of Human Resources, Labour and Employment: The Department of Human Resources, Labour and Employment is a provincial partner and has a provincial legislative responsibility to provide emergency social services when individuals, families and/or municipalities cannot effectively respond and/or when the provincial government needs to respond to ensure the health, safety and well-being of its citizens. The mandate of this Department includes the provision of food, clothing and lodging; the registration and inquiry of victims and the delivery of personal services. This Department has formal and informal agreements with non-government agencies such as the Red Cross and the Salvation Army to assist in the delivery of its mandate as well as access to Departmental personnel.

⁴ www.redcross.ca



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St. Pierre and Miquelon: St. Pierre and Miquelon are French governed islands located 5 kilometres off the south coast of the island of Newfoundland. Municipal authorities from St. Pierre, as well as Les Affaires Maritimes and Gendarmes, were involved in this exercise.

The Towns of Fortune and Grand Bank: Fortune is a community located approximately 4 hours drive from the provincial capital, St. John's. The town is located on the south eastern coast of Newfoundland. The town of Fortune lies approximately 25 kilometres from the island of St. Pierre and is home to the ferry connecting Newfoundland to St. Pierre.

Grand Bank is Fortune's sister community, having a slightly larger population and sharing numerous essential services with Fortune. While most of the exercise took place in Fortune, the Emergency Operations Center for Ocean Guardian was housed at the Grand Bank Town Hall.

Newfoundland and Labrador Ground Search and Rescue Association: NLGSRA are responsible for ground & inland water searches under the jurisdiction of the local policing agencies. The Newfoundland and Labrador Search and Rescue Association are comprised of 27 teams from across the province and made up of 1000+ volunteers.





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Section 3 - Scenario

Ocean Guardian II was a marine security exercise designed to test the ability of St. Pierre and Miquelon as well as Newfoundland and Labrador responders to cooperate and effectively manage an emergency at sea involving the St. Pierre – Fortune ferry. The scenario for this exercise drew upon the current climate of international terrorism and transportation security. The exercise was planned to revolve around the received knowledge that members of a terrorist organization were passengers aboard the ferry linking St. Pierre and Newfoundland.



Mr. Jean-Marc Boulanger, a French millionaire and Islamic sympathizer, headed the terrorist organization, known as FABA. Mr. Boulanger owned a shipping company in Argentia, Newfoundland that facilitated the transportation of cargo from Eastern Europe to North America via Newfoundland. His organization was linked to numerous extremist radicals and to the disappearance of enriched uranium from Russia.

International authorities had been following the actions of FABA members closely; and, upon the arrest of 4 group members in Morocco, had reason to suspect that the group was planning an attack involving a large explosive device. At the same time, *The Wall Street Journal* in New York received a suspicious letter threatening a major terrorist attack would occur against Wall Street within 12 months. Over the next 6 months, this letter was received by various other media organizations in the United States. International investigators linked FABA to these letters and planned to move in on the organization before it was able to carry out any attacks. It became known to investigators that FABA members would be traveling aboard the MV Arethusa, the passenger ferry between St. Pierre and Fortune, on September 13th. It was suspected that they were traveling with automatic weapons and possibly with enriched uranium.

It was decided that an international sweep of FABA would take place on September 13th, involving arrests and operations in Canada, France and the United States. The Canadian authorities decided to confront the FABA members while they were still onboard the M.V. Arethusa to avoid any possible escapes by land.



When the suspected terrorists became aware that they were under surveillance onboard the ferry, they detonated an explosive device to distract authorities. From there, police, search and rescue and health authorities, along with numerous others, moved in to respond to this emergency situation.



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Section 4 - Ocean Guardian II Exercise Day 1

4.0 General

The Ocean Guardian II exercise was conducted over two days. September 13th was intended to be the day of activities for the RCMP, and the response would be solely from the policing authorities. The timeline was created such that September 13th would involve the type of response that would take place within the first few hours of an actual explosion by terrorists. For safety reasons, September 14th would be played as if it were a continuation of the day before, after the police had finished their part of the response.

The exercise for day 1 of Ocean Guardian II was intended as a practice of counter terror measures for the RCMP. The expected response relevant to this particular day involved the RCMP preparing to storm the M.V. Arethusia, when the FABAs members on board became aware of the situation and detonated an explosive on board of the ship. The Arethusia sent out a distress signal because of a hole in the vessel caused by the explosion. Consequently, chaos ensued on board the ship.



The passengers panicked and amidst the confusion, some jumped overboard. The captain turned the ship around towards Fortune, aiming to get as close to land as possible before the vessel sank. In doing this, the ship left persons and life rafts behind in the water. Having travelled only a short distance, the ferry stalled and began to sink.



A second scenario also took place on day 1 involving a call made to the RCMP about a possible explosive device placed in a car on the Government Wharf in Fortune. The RCMP conducted a third agency specific scenario on day 1 which involved a suspected terrorist taking refuge in a house in Fortune with possible hostages, claiming to have detonators for other explosives throughout town. The five

components that the RCMP wanted to exercise during this day included their Emergency Response Team, Negotiators, Explosives Disposal Units, Incident Commanders, and Detachment First Responders. With all of these scenarios unfolding early in the morning on September 13th, the exercise was quickly underway.



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4.1 Observations from Day 1

Regarding any security threat occurring in Canada, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police are mandated to respond while an investigation occurs into possible criminal activity. The structure of day 1 of Ocean Guardian II was to handle only the RCMP component of the response. This structure created a pause in time in which the response was broken in two, with the Search and Rescue component occurring on the next day. This breakdown was essential to test all of the response mechanisms that the participants deemed necessary.

Possible safety concerns were identified with the increased risk of injury due to decreasing visibility as the day ended. However, all participants did not properly understand this breakdown. When adding a complicating factor such as this to an already complex situation, it is necessary to ensure that the process is clear to everyone in order to avoid confusion about the flow of events. A recommendation for future exercises where complicated scenarios are present is that an orientation process would take place the day before the exercise. Participants would go through a dry run or conduct a short tabletop exercise to ensure all participants understand what would be taking place and when it will occur. This orientation was part of the planning for Ocean Guardian II; however, it did not occur due to a concurrent Search and Rescue operation.



In this exercise, while the events took place in areas under Fortune's jurisdiction, Grand Bank was the community that played the role of hosting the response. A number of players questioned this logic. Should this scenario occur, Fortune would most likely be the lead town involved in the response. This would be true even if the EOC had to be moved to Grand Bank because of tenuous situations in Fortune. One factor in the decision to have Grand Bank play this role was the existing infrastructure for the exercise. Fortune was also concerned about their ability to play such a big role. Both towns appeared to be somewhat unsure of the major role and function of the town in an emergency situation.

A recommendation for future exercises would be that the Emergency Measures Organization would meet with the town leaders before an exercise is to take place and provide proper training to the town officials about the nature and responsibilities of their roles in a crisis. Furthermore, town officials should be aware of their emergency plan before the commencement of an exercise. While this may be time consuming, familiarity with the emergency procedures before the beginning of an exercise, can only aid in helping the exercise unfold smoothly and successfully.



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Overall, The Royal Canadian Mounted Police did a very good job of managing the EOC on Day 1. They held a number of briefings and frequently shared information with the other organizations in the EOC. There was a large RCMP presence in the EOC and this added to the noise level. However, this would not be a problem in an actual emergency because the RCMP would not be set up in this manner. Instead, they would be operating from a local detachment and their own Emergency Operations Centre in St. John's, with a liaison in the EOC.



The RCMP presence in the EOC created for Ocean Guardian II was set-up for educational purposes. In so doing, other agencies and observers could see how the RCMP would operate in this sort of situation. To add a greater degree of realism to future exercises, it may be useful to have the RCMP set up in a separate room or area of the EOC.

There were only two other major issues that arose on day 1 of Ocean Guardian II. The first involved security around the EOC in Grand Bank. No obvious security barriers were set up around the EOC. Some individuals attempted to take this upon themselves. However, other EOC members interpreted this in a hostile manner. In future exercises, it will be essential to have EOC security present, as securing the EOC will be a major benefit in guarding against intrusion by members of the media or 'sight seers'.

Furthermore, the extra scenario being played out solely by the RCMP caused problems in relation to the media teams. Late changes, which were meant to add realism to the scenario, created problems because they hastened involvement of media actors.

Involvement of the media was not to begin until the second day of the exercise. Persons designated to act in the roles of journalists and family members could not fully participate due to the last minute changes to the scenario. These actions led to confusion for other parties participating in the exercise, as they were unable to adapt to these last minute changes.





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Section 5 - Ocean Guardian II Exercise Day 2

5.0 General

The intention of the second day of Ocean Guardian II was designed to exercise the Search and Rescue component of a disaster at sea involving the St. Pierre – Fortune ferry. The exercise for this day was to commence as though the RCMP tactical squads had just secured the ferry and were assured there was no danger to other responders. Planned anticipated reaction for this day included transferring passengers from the M.V. Arethusa, registering these passengers and having them receive proper medical treatment. Also, responders were to find and recover all objects in the water, which consisted of targets representing deceased casualties and life preserving equipment. Responders were also responsible for tracking all or persons on board or POB's.



The passengers aboard the ferry were to be transferred to the French Patrol Vessel Fulmar, the first ship on the scene. Passengers were then brought ashore for triage and medical treatment. After assessment, all passengers and belongings were to be accounted for by Canadian Customs and Border Service at the Fortune wharf before being registered by the Canadian Red Cross, which was set up at Customs House on site.





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5.1 Observations from Day 2



The second day of the Ocean Guardian II exercise began with the rescue of the passengers from the M.V. Arethusia. Passengers consisted of volunteers who were designated and characterized through the use of makeup, to represent various injuries and casualties as a result of the explosion on board the ship. Passengers were evacuated from the ferry to the French Patrol Vessel Fulmar, then to be taken back to land for medical attention with the help of a

Canadian Coast Guard lifeboat and a French Auxiliary Vessel, SNS 121. Although there seemed to be some confusion on board the M.V. Arethusia when officials first reached the scene, this was quickly overcome and the victims were transferred in the proper manner.

For future exercises, it is important to note that making non-injured passengers aware of the evacuation plan may go a long way to alleviate some of the stress of the situation. Such announcements are marine protocol and are the responsibility of the vessel's Captain. These announcements should always be conducted as part of the protocol to be followed by ships in distress.

Those responding onboard the vessel were also faced with a language barrier; whereby, players from St. Pierre spoke in French and many of the Canadian players were unable to understand them. While the St. Pierre authorities made it clear during the planning of the exercise that they wished to operate in English only, this desire was not communicated effectively to the F.P.V. Fulmar crew.

Hence, to develop proper communication flow in future exercises; it may be wise to ensure that a French speaking person is taking part in the exercise. Preparation for language accommodation was made during the planning portion of Ocean Guardian II; however, it did not come to fruition because of various unforeseen events such as an ongoing marine SAR incident.

The actual search conducted by CCG and participants from 103 Rescue Squadron was carried out without major problems. Both of these organizations are highly experienced and effective in carrying out SAR activities and performed with a high level of competence in finding the SAR targets throughout the entire scene.





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Internal and external communication problems led to a number of challenges at the incident site. Both CBSA and the Red Cross representatives at the Fortune wharf did not receive notice of the victim's arrival at the site. Therefore, both organizations were left waiting for a call to prompt them to act.

The Canadian Red Cross arrived on the scene early on the morning of September 14th to set up a registration area for those coming off the ferry. The Red Cross, under contract from the province through Human Resources, Labour, and Employment, registers disaster victims. In a major event, they record the names and contact details of survivors. All processing for this event was to be done at the Canada Customs and Border Security Agency building at the Fortune wharf.



CBSA is responsible for securing areas of the wharf and for monitoring all people on their section of the wharf and in their building. However, as official observers and other responders came to the wharf in anticipation of the ferry's arrival with victims on board, no one from CBSA was checking for identification or attempting to secure access to the area. This was due to internal communications problems that thwarted activation of proper procedure.

Furthermore, no representative from CBSA was present on the wharf to release people and items from official CBSA custody, as is current procedure. This caused confusion for Red Cross representatives and other agencies as they were waiting for CBSA officials to notify them that they could begin registration of the victims who had arrived.



In the confusion, there was no one on the wharf to meet passengers as they disembarked from the boats. Hence, no one knew who was disembarking these vessels and persons could fairly easily have left the scene without being registered or accounted for. In a situation such as was depicted in the exercise, a member of the terrorist organization who had escaped the police raid onboard of

the M/V Arethusa could have easily slipped away from the scene and entered Canada without being noticed.

Furthermore, much chaos could have been caused for victim's families if a severely traumatized passenger had wandered away from the scene without being identified by the authorities. Having missing victims suffering from severe traumatic stress and wandering through the wharf area or the town would add to the tasks of an already stressed response system.



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Communication issues also arose in relation to radio communication between the various participants. The radio frequency designated for this exercise became extremely crowded and noisy. Therefore, the Captain of the F.P.V. Fulmar switched radio frequencies without notifying any other persons of this change. These actions greatly impacted on other agencies in the exercise as they were operating on different radio frequencies. Vessels carrying the passengers into port could not communicate effectively.



The health representatives at the Casualty Reception Point (CRP) experienced a continuous problem dealing with the number of casualties who disembarked from the Fulmar. Members of the Peninsula Health Care Corporation were unable to locate supplies that were supposed to have been left for them at Customs House. Furthermore, these health care providers seemed overwhelmed with the number of victims being off loaded. On a number of occasions, casualties with severe injuries were left lying in an open area of the wharf. Casualties with serious injuries were also left lying in the middle of the floor inside Customs House while crowds gathered around them. The most dramatic of these incidents was a SAR target representing a deceased person that was left fully exposed on the wharf for almost 10 minutes.

This wharf also lacked any type of external security. On-lookers gathered around Customs House to the extent that fire trucks and ambulances had trouble getting through the crowds. In an emergency, such crowds would have obstructed ambulances and could have significantly hindered medical treatment. In the event of an actual emergency in this area, CBSA is in charge of securing the area around its wharf and parking lot and providing access.



In future exercises, it may be good practice to exercise securing this area from onlookers and the media. Then, officials would be able to provide swift and unhindered access to emergency vehicles. Furthermore, it is up to the Incident Commanders to request assistance from the RCMP to aid in securing the area. The intent is to keep unnecessary vehicles and persons as far away as possible. Such actions will make it much easier to respond to the emergency at hand, with fewer distractions from the curious and the press.



Outside of the actual Casualty Reception Point, the Emergency Operations Center continued running at the Grand Bank Town Hall on day 2, as well. The focus of the exercise had shifted from police matters to the marine search and rescue. The Canadian Coast Guard was the lead agency on day 2 and had a representative acting at EOC as a MRSC Liaison Officer.



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The transition from the RCMP to the CCG went smoothly as the day began. However, the CCG representative was soon overwhelmed with the enormity of the task, as only a minimal presence had been assigned. The massive amount of information being tasked required a larger presence in the EOC on behalf of the CCG. The ability of CCG to provide a larger presence in the EOC was greatly affected by an ongoing SAR taking place at the time.

Other than the problems experienced with triage set up on the wharf, PHHC had no problems in dealing with the casualties they received. Grand Bank Community Health Care Centre deals with medical emergencies on a regular basis. The major test for them was to deal with a larger number than usual, as demonstrated by the incident on the M.V. Arethusa. However, no major issues were reported in handling this challenge.

Also, the Salvation Army did an excellent job of providing provisions to all those involved in Ocean Guardian II on both days of the exercise.





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Section 6 - Overall Suggestions and Observations

6.0 General

The following section of this report highlights those areas of Ocean Guardian II that were problematic for the overall exercise and/or the agencies involved; and, it addresses some considerations for future exercises.

6.1 Planning

The first overall observation from Ocean Guardian II is that the short 6-week period during the summer of 2005 during which the exercise was planned, illustrates the high degree of co-operation between agencies involved. However, for future exercises, it would be useful to take more time for the planning stages for a number of reasons.

Firstly, a longer planning phase would allow for more time to thoroughly review the scenario and operations orders. This would help identify any problems or complications before the exercise commences. A longer planning phase gives all organizations involved an opportunity to discuss how they would like to approach the exercise and what role they would like to play. Although this was done for Ocean Guardian II, a longer planning period would give all respective agencies more time to evaluate what it is that their organizations need to test and how they would like to go about doing this.



A longer planning period would also allow for the Emergency Operations Center to be set up further in advance of the exercise. Having an EOC set up sufficiently in advance would allow for Internet and other communication networking to be properly tested and corrective measures administered. During Ocean Guardian II, the Internet network was set up the day before the exercise started and participants encountered problems with this network system. A longer set-up period would offer planners a better opportunity to work out these concerns before the exercise begins. This would let the exercise unfold as smoothly as possible.

Furthermore, a longer planning period could help eliminate some of the issues that arose in relation to the participation of the communities involved. As the towns have such an important role in an emergency situation, it is essential to have representatives of these towns participate fully in the exercise. In relation to Fortune and Grand Bank, both of these communities wanted to act as observers of the exercise taking place, as both towns originally stated that they did not feel comfortable taking on a major role.





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If the planning phase of the exercise had been longer, it would have been possible for the towns to receive proper training on their role in this mock disaster from the provincial NL Emergency Measures Organization. Such training could have increased the confidence of the towns in their ability to take part in the exercise, which would have eliminated many of the problems relative to both communities.

6.2 Scenario



One of the best elements of the overall exercise arises from the scenario. The scenario was created to test an international search and rescue cooperation agreement, while also taking the current political security environment into account. Such realism makes an excellent addition to the goals of the exercise. The experience gained, not only by the lead agency tasked to respond to terrorist attacks, but also by those organizations which would be affected by a marine security situation, cannot be understated. While the concept of maritime security was addressed with this scenario, many of the details lacked realism, which weakened its credibility, thereby leaving room for questions about the exercise's overall plot.

For future exercises, it would be highly beneficial to take a current theme in international response dialogue and build a scenario encompassing fact-based, realistic events. A realistic and relevant scenario would allow the exercise greater credibility in emergency preparedness circles and could then be promoted as proof of the high level of overall readiness in Newfoundland and Labrador. The exercise could then also be used as valuable learning material for others in the Emergency Response and Security fields.

6.3 Communications

Overall, the agencies involved in Ocean Guardian II were able to communicate fairly effectively with one another. Communication problems that did emerge were mostly linked to participants who did not understand the exercise's communications requirements. In many cases, problems occurred because of a lack of awareness about what information needed to be passed on and to whom.

Therefore, a key recommendation of this report is the use of further training to allow agencies to fully understand their role in an emergency response. Training could involve participation in the various courses offered by EMO and PSEPC combined with emphasized familiarity of their agency's emergency plan and revision of this plan as necessary.





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Other communications problems that were identified, can for the most part, be addressed by a longer planning period. Allocating more time for the planning phase of the exercise would allow agencies more opportunities to explain communications, roles, responsibilities, and limitations of each player with whom they must interact.

6.4 Media Relations

A further recommendation of this report is that the media relations experts involved in responding to an event, such as those portrayed in Ocean Guardian II, take Emergency Response training courses in handling international media during a crisis. Large-scale crisis communication is a vastly different field from what most organizations do on a day-to-day basis. This type of communication demands different preparation and execution than do everyday operations.

The RCMP and Department of Fisheries and Oceans media representatives do an excellent job in handling local media on a daily basis. Therefore, one of the recommendations of this report is that the media relations experts involved in responding to an event such as that portrayed in Ocean Guardian II, take Emergency Response training courses in handling international media in a crisis. A course is offered by PSEPC on media management of large-scale emergencies. Such courses could be beneficial and interesting learning experiences for those tasked with media responsibilities in a crisis situation.



6.5 Flexibility

A further recommendation for future exercises is that the agencies not allow themselves to be too affected by the fact that a real emergency has not taken place. The knowledge that the events taking place were fictitious affected many of the players involved. In a number of situations, players faced situations that caused problems for them because they were not able or willing to adapt to the circumstances, rather than stick to the script that they were expecting. In an actual emergency, organizations and people would be forced to improvise and respond to unexpected hitches in their operations. Agencies should keep this same attitude of adaptability and flexibility in mind when dealing with exercises as well as real emergencies.



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6.6 Emergency Operations Center



The Emergency Operations Center set up for Ocean Guardian II provided a number of lessons for future exercises. Firstly, the number of persons working in the EOC must be limited. This number can be limited by creating a separate section within the building for a simulated RCMP detachment, as would be utilized in real life. Furthermore, those using radio equipment should be placed in a separate and removed area of the EOC, as it can be difficult for radio operators to hear

transmissions due to the noise level in the EOC. Conversely, it can be difficult for those in the EOC to hear briefings and announcements over noise of the radios.

During Ocean Guardian II, all agencies, for educational purposes, were located in the same room. In this way, participants could see and hear how the other agencies operate in emergency situations, as could the observers from the local high schools. However, if the goal were to simulate a realistic response environment, it would be appropriate to set up the EOC in the most realistic manner. Also, the set up of the EOC was not conducive to good communication because of the layout of tables. In the future, arrangement of the EOC should be set up to promote active communication between the agencies housed within it.

An operational security plan for the Emergency Operations Center is necessary.

Access to the centre must be restricted to officials from the response community. Security must be established to monitor all those entering the EOC, and must also be an official presence that deals with all persons in the same manner. This would be done to avoid preferential treatment or a possible conflict of interest.

6.7 Simulation Cells and Injects

One other issue that merits comment regarding Ocean Guardian II is simulation (sim) cells and injections. Those staffing the sim cell noted that in future exercises it would be best to staff the sim cell with a member from each agency. In doing so, someone familiar with the organization can add injects to prompt certain actions with greater effectiveness because of his/her personal knowledge of that agency.





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Section 7 -- Conclusion

Overall, the Ocean Guardian II exercise was a great success. Despite some previously mentioned issues that arose, this exercise presented a great opportunity for all who participated. The high level of cooperation amongst the various agencies stemmed from the planning phase. Organizations were able to practice their own roles in a response, as well as observe the roles of the other agencies involved, and the relations between them.

Participatory organizations were also able to observe the way in which an Emergency Operations Center functions during a response and become familiar with the key personnel within it. Knowledge gained here can prove vital in an actual emergency situation as agencies are more aware of how the response needs to unfold; and therefore, can act with greater speed and competence.

Ocean Guardian II offered an excellent educational experience to all those who participated and has allowed the response community in Newfoundland and Labrador and St. Pierre and Miquelon to be better prepared to handle International Search and Rescue and Marine Security disasters.





Eastern HEALTH



SEARCH AND RESCUE



RECHERCHE ET SAUVETAGE

