

1.0 SET PLANS

1.1 SET OVERVIEW

The SET (Simulated Emergency Test) is a yearly event, promoted by RAC (Radio Amateurs of Canada), through the ARES (Amateur Radio Emergency Service) program. The SET is an opportunity for local Amateur radio emergency communications groups to plan an exercise, to practice and promote the use of amateur radio for emergency communications.

In Ontario, a specific date is picked, to encourage neighbouring groups to include opportunities to communicate with each other into their exercise plans.

1.2 EMRG SET 2004 OBJECTIVE

The objectives this year were;

- establish communications with neighbouring ARES groups
- establish at least token HF communications on 40m
- do some familiarization with the communications centre, and further the liaison with the professionals there

2.0 SET REVIEW

2.1 SCENARIO

This years Simulated Emergency Test was a low key event in Ottawa. The SET is one of several exercises EMRG does each year. EMRG did not specifically recruit operators, and did not call out members. The instructions to EMRG members, was to check in on the EMRG repeater on Saturday morning. There was also no monitoring or recruiting during the event on other local repeaters.

2.2 GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The SET was successful, based on the objectives. In particular, TOM (VE3NFA) did a good job as net control. The pace of traffic was such that he had time to learn as the exercise progressed.

Mike (VE3FFK) got to work in a few of the management jobs at the communications centre. He found he stills needs more practice, especially in staying out of the front line when he should be looking at the big picture.

2.3 NEIGHBOURING ARES GROUPS

Direct VHF communications was completed with the Prescott Russell ARES Group and the Lanark North Leeds ARES group. The Renfrew ARES group communicated with EMRG via HF, and successful VHF communications on VE3STP and VE3ZRR repeaters was completed, but not with a Renfrew ARES member. The Brockville group was active and the repeater was monitored, but due to the traffic they were handling at the time, contact was not made.

2.4 NOTIFICATION

The lack of a call out probably disappointed some people, even though they were told (via email) to listen on the repeater. Perhaps more could have been done to let members know that this years set was about inter-communication, rather than intra-communication. Hopefully that disappointment does not turn into apathy. Those who did turn out should be recognized and thanked in some way.

2.5 HF LIAISON

The HF liaison worked well, but should have been thought out more in advance. Although it is probably not practical to have the HF operator listening to VHF continuously, it would be useful to arrange specific, regular intervals where the HF liaison station will check back in to the VHF net. As it was, outgoing traffic would have to wait an indeterminate amount of time until the HF liaison station decided to return to VHF.

A similar procedure should be in place if other specialized stations are established, such as a digital liaison, or APRS monitor, not co-located in the communications centre. Since access to a quiet receive environment as well as limited antennas and operating space are going to be constant facts of life at any communications centre this problem will return at each event.