BLACK SWAN MASS RESCUE EXERCISE (MRO) D14 FE 2015

After Action Report

18 Aug 2015 – 20 Aug 2015

Date Released 21 Apr 2016

	Exercise / Event Information
COE #	2862
Event Name	BLACK SWAN MASS RESCUE EXERCISE (MRO)
StartEx	18 Aug 2015
EndEx	20 Aug 2015
Event Type	Exercise
Submitting Organization	CGD FOURTEEN
OPFAC	14-71114
Type of Mission	Search and Rescue
Level of Effort	Sponsor
Type of Exercise	Functional Exercise (FE)

	Estimated Event Cost	Actual Event Cost
AFC-30:	$70,700.00	

	Point of Contact
Name:	GEORGE BUTLER
Location:	COAST GUARD DISTRICT 14
Address:	300 ALA MOANA BLVD
City, State, Zip Code	HONOLULU, HI 96850-4982
Email:	GEORGE.E.BUTLER@USCG.MIL
Phone:	808-535-3415

Attachments:
None

General Description:

Executive Summary:

The Black Swan Mass Rescue Operations (MRO) Functional Exercise (FE) 2015 was highly successful in exercising the interoperability of many federal agencies (DOD, DHS & DOS), a cruise ship company (Holland America Group) and a Pacific Island Nation (Republic of Marshall Islands), in responding to an evacuation of 3000+ survivors from a cruise ship catastrophe. The exercise challenged maintaining command, control and communications between multiple command posts separated by thousands of miles of ocean through a transition from a water-based rescue to an on-land recovery of the survivors. Though this report describes many lessons learned which will be incorporated into our CCGD14 OPLAN 9840-14(U), perhaps the most beneficial lesson learned was uncovering the capabilities, authorities, limitations and activation triggers of our fellow response agencies/organizations. Gaps were identified in national policy concerning catastrophic SAR and the activation of FEMA/USAID under the Stafford Act and Foreign Assistance Act as described in the FEMA/USAID "Operation Blue Print." The most difficult challenge in the exercise was keeping accurate accountability of the survivors through each phase of the response, as well as dealing with the tyranny of time and distance in providing logistical support to an MRO in this part of the world. The most valued benefit of hosting this exercise was getting to meet and work with our outstanding response partners in both the private industry and government agencies. The interaction with our partners and the benefits of building these relationships and rapport was immeasurable.

A. Summary of Operational Highlights

1. The Black Swan Mass Rescue Operations (MRO) Functional Exercise (FE) 2015 was a three day operations-based exercise. The exercise followed the Homeland Security Exercise Evaluation Program (HSEEP) and the USCG Contingency Preparedness Manual (CPM) Volume III guidelines.

2. Day One of the exercise covered the response phase which included the notification and communication processes. The exercise focused on the interaction between D14 JRCC and Holland America Group Emergency Response Center (ERC), responding to the shipboard emergency and evacuation of the vessel. The JRCC exercised and activated the CG's internal Critical Incident Communications (CIC) protocol also known as DAD SAFE with the Coast Guard National Command Center. The JRCC did a superb job in managing the first 24 hours of the response by identifying and dispatching many Air Assets, AMVER, DOD and other vessels of opportunity to serve as SAR assets, proving them with search patterns and SAR assignments. A practice that proved very effective in this exercise was the expanding of the JRCC's Situation Unit, per the surge plan on day one of the exercise.

3. Day Two, as the level of response increased, the management of the incident evolved into the establishment of a Unified Command Post and a Joint Information Center at Clean Islands Council (CIC) in Honolulu, HI. The on-water recovery activities continued as the response organization shifted from solely led by the JRCC to a Unified Command Post with representatives from multiple agencies, focusing on the on-water transfer, accountability and landing of the survivors. All of the UC Post ICS sections were stood up and staffed with representatives from CG JRCC, HA Group, DoD, DMAT and DoS. RMI participated at their EOC in Majuro with the assistance of a CG Liaison from CGD14 and a Passenger Vessel Safety Specialist (PVSS) who provided RMI players with ICS coaching.

4. Day Three focused on the land-based response phase. Senior level leaders from CGD14, DoD, DoS, CBP, HA Group and DMAT met with the goal of discussing the needed strategy to

effectively carry out all the elements of a MRO land based response to include: landing operations, accountability, triage, reception centers, and repatriation of survivors. Discussion stemmed around the authorities, capabilities, limitations and activation requirements of the various agencies in response to an MRO.
5. The exercise included 6 exercise objectives. All the planned exercise objectives were covered and met during the three day event. Objectives 1 - 5 were completed and met during Day One and Day Two. Objective 6 was completed and met on Day Three.
B. Major Strengths:

1. The Black Swan MRO event brought various US government agencies, an NGO and a foreign government together for the rescue, medical triage, and repatriating passengers and crew from a cruise ship disaster. These various entities worked together and quickly formed partnerships to address issues to ensure an effective unified response to a Mass Rescue Operation occurring in the D14 AOR. The interaction of these various entities during this event identified relevant vulnerabilities and heightened awareness which will facilitate the successful activation of the D14 MRO plan in future events.

1. The response was based on a sound and thorough District MRO Plan that operationally laid out the overall response. The plan was used frequently during the exercise as a reference.
2. There was excellent attendance, coordination and interoperability by representatives from the Coast Guard, DoD, DoS, DMAT, Red Cross, HA Group, and RMI. Approximately 130 people participated in the three day event.
3. There was fantastic cooperation and participation by the Exercise Design Team formed by representatives from the Coast Guard (led by the Exercise Support Team), DoD, DoS, DMAT, Red Cross, CBP, HA Group, and RMI.
4. CGD14 dispatched a CG Passenger Vessel Safety Specialist (PVSS) closest to Princess Cruise ERC in Santa Clarita, California to assist as a CG Liaison Officer (CG LNO), and a CG Passenger Vessel Safety Specialist (PVSS) and a CGD14 SAR LNO to RMI to assist with the incident at RMI's EOC located in Majuro, RMI. All were very effective in ensuring an effective and efficient response.
5. Exercise players were assisted by representatives of the CG Pacific Area (PACAREA) Incident Management Team (IMAT) who acted as ICS coaches. These coaches assisted responders less verse in the use of ICS and led to a smoother response.
6. This was the first time the CG Joint Rescue Coordination Center (JRCC) established a UC Post to respond to an incident of the magnitude presented in the exercise scenario. The use of ICS coaches proved extremely helpful and effective.
7. CGD14 developed and provided a VIP/observer program which was well received by all attendees. The VIP/Observer program provided visitors from several countries a full week of exposure to all aspects of an MRO. This program included demonstrations of SAR assets, tours of CG Cutters and CG Air Station, viewing of exercise, demonstration of "Black Swan Game", as well as presentations from some of the exercise participating agencies/organizations.

C. Areas for Improvement, Efficiency, Coordination, and Interoperability

1. A key aspect of the exercise was the development of an ICS UC organization structure which before the exercise did not exist. Optimally, all participants would be verse in ICS, however due to the number of agencies and organizations being represented, it is nearly impossible for everyone to be experts in ICS. In this regard, ICS coaches from the IMAT served very well to provide advice and coaching along the way. Increased ICS training, check sheets and quick ICS training sheet could be provided to novice responders, to help understand the process.

8. The need to have a universally applicable mechanism way to share command, control and communications between multiple command posts, providing a common operating picture is essential. A system needs to be identified which is available to all response agencies and organizations, and responders provided training on the application.
9. The current D14 MRO plan is very comprehensive and was well used during the exercise. However, there were many areas for improvement identified and will be incorporated in this after action report. Furthermore, specific information for each of the 3 compact nations in the D14 SAR AOR should be available in the form of an RMI MRO appendix to their National Disaster Plan and an IAP annex to our D14 OPLAN.
10. Maintaining survivor accountability is perhaps the greatest challenge when conducting a Mass Rescue Operation. Expectations, roles, responsibilities and a definition of accountability through each phase of the MRO is needed. Universal marking system for liferafts/boats is required to list key SAR information such as number of people on board, medical needs and number of deceased. This information marked on top of a liferaft/boat could provide essential SAR information to overhead and distant SAR assets.

Operational Data:

A. Scenario

The P/V HAWAIIAN SUN encounters floating containers. In making high speed turns to avoid them, multiple passengers and crew are injured. The P/V strikes a container which causes hull damage beyond the capability of the pumps to keep up with. A distress call is issued when they are about 160 nm south of Majuro, Republic of the Marshall Islands. The initial reports had 200 critically injured passengers and crew needing immediate MEDEVAC with approximately 500 additional people with minor injuries. The P/V HAWAIIAN SUN then sinks with 2800 passengers and crew having abandoned ship.

B. Incident Management Concept

The exercise followed the Homeland Security Exercise Evaluation Program (HSEEP) and the USCG Contingency Preparedness Manual (CPM) Volume III guidelines. The incident was managed as follows:

11. Exercise players at the UC Post, used elements identified in the National Incident Management System (NIMS) Incident Command System.
12. On day one, the incident was initially managed at the CG JRCC working closely with HA Group's ERC in Santa Clarita, CA. As the level of response increased, the management of the incident evolved into the establishment of a Unified Command Post and a Joint Information Center at Clean Islands Council (CIC) in Honolulu, HI on day two of the exercise.

13. All of the UC Post ICS Sections were stood up and staffed with representatives from CG JRCC, HA Group, DoD, DMAT and DoS. Unfortunately, representatives from Majuro, RMI could not be present at the UC Post in Honolulu. They participated at their EOC in Majuro with the assistance of a CG liaison from CGD14 and a Passenger Vessel Safety Specialist (PVSS), who provided RMI players with ICS coaching during day two of the exercise.
14. A practice that proved very effective in this exercise was the establishment of the Situation Unit at the JRCC on day one of the exercise.
15. The JRCC exercised and activated the CG's internal Critical Incident Communications (CIC) protocol, also known as DAD SAFE, with the Coast Guard National Command Center.
16. The exercise included a Simulation Cell (SIMCELL) which was located at Clean Islands Council on day one and day two of the exercise.

Support Data:

A. Planning

FORCECOM Exercise Support Team 3 was assigned to assist CGD14 with the exercise design and execution. Planning for the Functional Exercise began in August of 2014 immediately following a seminar developed to prepare participating agencies for the operational exercise scheduled for 2015.

B. Logistics

CGD14**,** Sector Honolulu, CIC, and Exercise Support Team 3 provided all of the logistical support needed for the FE, which consisted of projectors, laptops, exercise documents, posters, sign-in sheets and exercise feedback forms.

C. Supplies

The selected venue for the exercise was furnished with tables, chairs, several projection screens for the power point presentations, printers, and an excellent emergency cell phone system used in the SIMCELL and for selected exercise participants.

D. Financial issues

There were no financial issues.

E. Legal issues

There were no legal issues.

F. Public Affairs

There was no real media at the event. Exercise participants included USCG Public Information Officers (PIOs) from CGD14 and members of the Public Information Assist Team (PIAT).

Location of Operation:

Joint Rescue Coordination Center (JRCC): Coast Guard District 14, 300 Ala Moana Blvd, Room 9-204, Honolulu, HI 96850-4982
Clean Islands Council (CIC): 179 Sand Island Access Road, Honolulu, Hawaii 96819
HA Group ERC: Princess Cruise Line, 24200 Magic Mountain Parkway, Santa Clarita, CA 91355-1283
RMI EOC: RMI's LOMOR Sea Patrol Bld. 2nd Floor, MIMRA Dock Facilities, Delap Majuro Atoll, Marshall Islands

Location of Personnel:

Same as Location of Operations.

Objectives and Major Lessons:

A. Objectives

17. Exercise specific areas of the District's MRO plan (Appendix 26 to Annex C to CCGD14 OPLAN 9840-14(U)).
18. Establish a Unified Command to include a Joint Information Center in response to a remote high seas MRO.
19. Coordinate response and recovery actions and communications between multiple EOCs (international, private and other federal agencies).
20. Establish and maintain passenger, crew and responder accountability procedures:
    a. Sharing accountability processes within response organization (such as WebEOC).
    b. Coordinate with Red Cross, DoD, DMAT, HA Group, DoS, RMI and USCG on victim accountability sharing.
21. Establish appropriate response structures for various phases of the MRO, establishing appropriate span of control and delegation of authority based on the evolving incident and the geographic location of command (such as coordination between the SAR Mission Controller, On Scene Coordinator, Holland America Group's ERC, and Republic of The Marshall Islands' EOC.
22. Develop framework through discussion of transition of responsibilities and command between on-water rescue and land based coordination of survivor care and passenger repatriation.

B. Summary of Main Lessons Learned

There are 18 specific lessons learned (LLs) from the exercise evaluation analysis with emphasis in the following areas:

Use of the Incident Command System (ICS):

- ICS training.
- Integrate surge staffing transition process into the UC.
- Obtain appropriate communications equipment to establish a functional Unified Command Post

- Use of the Homeland Security Information Network (HSIN) and WebEOC:
  - Improve data archiving process in HSIN.
  - Develop Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) & training for HSIN.
  - Improve use of shared web applications for situational awareness/communications and a common operating picture.
- Use and knowledge of the D14 MRO Plan:
  - Review and update the Legal Annex to the D14 OPLAN.

- Include Pre-populated Incident Action Plan into the D14 MRO Plan.
- Add senior leader level coordination process to the D14 MRO Plan.
- Review and update Annex G.
- Include and clarify liaison officer role into the D14 MRO Plan.
- Discuss D14 MRO Plan with IAP supplements (once developed) w/ US embassies in the D14 AOR.
- Establish good points of contact for GOV officials in D14's AOR.

- Management of MRO elements such as:
  - Improve survivor accountability process for MRO incidents.
  - Improved coordination of inter-agency coordination of aviation SAR assets.
  - Identify raft availability in advance of a MRO.
  - RMI's development of MRO appendix to the Natural Disaster Plan
  - Approve use of non-supported communication systems (i.e. g-mail, Facebook, Twitter, etc.) to enhance communications.

Limitations and Casualties:

Limitations

23. Not having RMI representatives present at the CIC on day two and day three of the exercise deprived exercise players of complete answers to many questions that surfaced during the exercise related to the land based response phase of the exercise.
24. Time zone differences between Hawaii, RMI and Santa Clarita CA added a challenge to exercise players as time compressions were necessary to execute the exercise.

Casualties

None.

Participants:

- USCG District Fourteenth (USCG D14)
- Republic of The Marshall Islands (RMI)
- Department of Defense (DoD)
- Department of State (DoS)
- Customs and Border Protection (CBP)
- Red Cross (coordination with International Committee of the Red Cross)
- Holland America (HA) Group
- Disaster Medical Assist Team (DMAT)

Title	Develop ICS Orientation Handout
Recommended Action	No further action required
Type of Contingency	MASS RESCUE OPERATIONS (MRO)
ICS Category	0 UNIFIED COMMAND
Core Component	Other
Recommended Action Area	Performance

Observation:
Some exercise participants reporting to the Unified Command (UC) were not proficient with ICS.

Discussion:
Coast Guard, partner agency representatives, and responsible party participants in the UC had various levels of ICS knowledge and proficiency.

Lesson Learned/Best Practice:
All positions required to staff a full UC for an MRO should be identified in WQSB and individuals pre-identified to fill those positions should be required to have the pre-requisite ICS training. Check-in staff or ICS coaches could screen participants at report-in to access ICS training and familiarity needs.

Recommendation:

1) The D14 WQSB should include all positions needed for full UC augmentation and identified personnel should receive ICS instruction.
2) Opportunities to teach ICS training & EOC management to nations w/in our SAR AOR should be pursued and included in SAR/MRO exercises (tabletops and workshops).
3) Develop a short just in time ICS orientation (handout)/presentation for those unfamiliar in ICS. Identify ICS coaches from PAC IMAT or CG IMAT as part of a large scale stand-up of ICS, such as an MRO.

Comment:

Title	Obtain Comms Equipment - CGOne Network
Recommended Action	No further action required
Type of Contingency	MASS RESCUE OPERATIONS (MRO)
ICS Category	3 LOGISTICS SECTION
Core Component	Communications
Recommended Action Area	Performance

Observation:

Once the Unified Command (UC) was stood up on day two, having HSIN available for most players to coordinate and communicate was positive. However the lack of computers available to all who needed them was a challenge.

Discussion:

Two members of the Operations Section were forced to use personal tablets for internet access and the complete lack of CGOne net access severely hampered situational awareness. Access to SAROPS or any other common operating picture was problematic.

Lesson Learned/Best Practice:

Clean Islands Council provided adequate communications and stand alone computers, but may not be available to house the Unified Command over a long duration or for a larger scale response. The UC Post could be set up at a variety of locations, but would need to be immediately equipped with adequate communication capabilities. This cache of communications equipment must be available for use.

Recommendation:

Engage with ESD and Coast Guard Pacific Area Incident Management Team to provide contingency communications specifically CGOne network access at which ever UCP facility is identified and ensure the following:
Add list of equipment needed into MRO Plan.
Identify alternative spaces/locations for UC Post.

Comment:

Title	Define Surge Staffing in MRO Plan/QRC
Recommended Action	No further action required
Type of Contingency	MASS RESCUE OPERATIONS (MRO)
ICS Category	2 PLANNING SECTION
Core Component	Staff Mobilization
Recommended Action Area	Plans

Observation:

The JRCC was tasked beyond their scope and capacity of their normal watch standers to augment the staff. There was no clear staffing organization identified on what positions, roles or responsibilities were needed by the surged staff.

Discussion:

As the exercise grew in scope, the JRCC did not effectively establish clear roles and responsibilities for the surged staff. This allowed for confusion when senior leadership tried to direct the establishment of the Unified Command (UC) Post. Especially when it came time to conduct an initial ICS-201 brief to the UC (Planning Section Chief did briefing). A more effective way may have been to send the augmented staff from the JRCC over to the command post to conduct or enhance the initial 201 brief to the UC. This also would have provided the SMC present at the command post the most updated information on the MRO response.

Lesson Learned/Best Practice:

Further policy is needed to manage expectations, roles and responsibilities of the surge staffing leading up to the establishment of the UC Post and included into the MRO Plan and JRCC MRO QRC

Recommendation:

Amend D14 MRO Plan & MRO QRC to define surge staffing roles/responsibilities to manage span of control and additional workload.

Comment:

Title	Add IAP Templates in the MRO Annex - OPLAN
Recommended Action	No further action required
Type of Contingency	MASS RESCUE OPERATIONS (MRO)
ICS Category	2 PLANNING SECTION
Core Component	Operate within management system
Recommended Action Area	Plans

Observation:

The Incident Command created several products that would be useful for future MRO operations.

Discussion:

Much of the material and decisions captured on the ICS-201, 202, 205, 207, 215, 233, 234, and other forms during the exercise can be generally applied to other MRO events. For example, partner agency priorities and critical information requirements established by the UC will likely be similar for most MRO incidents. A pre-loaded organizational structure encompassing other agencies positions, relationship between personnel accountability branch and shoreside branch, and assignment of an IT specialist would be helpful. Tactical operations and resource needs detailed in the ICS-215 are also likely to be similar.

Lesson Learned/Best Practice:

ICS forms developed during the exercise should be reviewed and adapted for inclusion into the MRO Plan as an Incident Action Plan (IAP) template. This template should be designated as a "model" for IAP development, not as a prescriptive document.

Recommendation:

Create IAP templates and add as a tab or enclosure to the MRO Appendix of the OPLAN.

- ICS-202 (Incident Objectives) ICS-207 (Organizational Chart)
- ICS-205 (Communications Plan) ICS-215 (Operational Planning Worksheet)

ICS-233 (Open Action Tracker) ICS-234 (Work Analysis Matrix)

Comment:

Title	Improve Data Archiving Process in HSIN
Recommended Action	Recommend follow-on action COMDT
Type of Contingency	MASS RESCUE OPERATIONS (MRO)
ICS Category	0 UNIFIED COMMAND
Core Component	Communications
Recommended Action Area	Performance

Observation:

HSIN was instrumental in the exercise by enabling the passing of pertinent information between command posts, being able to upload a share ICS forms and documents, and enabling a screen shot of the search patterns being used by the various SAR vessels. However, during the exercise, a participant with access to the Homeland Security Information Network (HSIN) collaboration page, established for the exercise, closed the Operations (Ops) Collaboration window. This resulted in a loss of all data entered into the Ops window to that point. There is no evidence to suggest that this lost data was saved to any HSIN database prior to window closure. Furthermore, the HSIN database does not appear to allow for the archiving and/or printing of data entered into HSIN collaboration windows.

Discussion:

HSIN is the trusted network for first responders to share sensitive but unclassified information between federal, state, local, territorial, tribal, international, and private sector partners to manage operations, analyze data, send alerts, and notices, and in general, facilitate communications and information sharing during contingency response operations. If HSIN is to remain the primary source for this information sharing a response management system, it needs to be improved. Since incident response documentation may be considered official records, and subject to subsequent administrative or legal scrutiny, it is important that HSIN feature data archiving in addition to collaboration and information-sharing capabilities.

Lesson Learned/Best Practice:

The web-based HSIN collaboration and information-sharing tool should be updated to eliminate the possibility of data loss upon the inadvertent closure of a collaboration window. In addition, HSIN should be updated to allow for the archiving and printing of data entered into collaboration windows.

Recommendation:

CG-633 should work with DHS HSIN technical development representatives to affect the following updates to the HSIN collaboration tool:

1. Develop measures to prevent data loss due to the closure of HSIN collaboration windows.
2. Develop the HSIN collaboration tool data archiving and print capabilities.

Comment:

18 Apr 2016: RAI assigned to CG-633/635 for review/comment.

Title	Develop SOP and Training for HSIN
Recommended Action	Recommend follow-on action District [CCGD 14]
Type of Contingency	MASS RESCUE OPERATIONS (MRO)
ICS Category	1 OPERATIONS SECTION
Core Component	Operate within management system
Recommended Action Area	Performance

Observation:

Exercise players physically located with the Unified Command (UC) and Joint Rescue Coordination Center (JRCC) regularly used the Homeland Security Information Network (HSIN) collaboration windows to communicate internal and external resource requests. Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) personnel representing the RMI Emergency Operations Center heavily relied upon HSIN and e-mail to communicate requests for information, resource requests, and RMI senior leadership key decisions to the JRCC and UC.

Discussion:

HSIN is the trusted network for first responders to share sensitive but unclassified information. Federal, state, local, territorial, tribal, international, and private sector homeland security partners use HSIN to manage operations, analyze data, send alerts and notices, and in general, facilitate communications and information sharing during contingency response operations. Collaboration windows were set up in HSIN for the following Unified Command (UC) elements during the MRO exercise:

- Air Operations (Ops)
- Ops
- Planning
- SITU
- Finance & Logistics

These collaboration windows socialized senior level key decisions, requests for information, and resource requests both internal and external to the UC, and was visable for all HSIN users to maintain situational awareness.

Lesson Learned/Best Practice:

The HSIN collaboration windows continue to scroll as data is added real-time, with the most current data appearing at the bottom of the window and older data disappearing from view at the top of the window. As a result, some incident responders with access to HSIN missed key information if they were not monitoring the HSIN at the specific time when the data was posted and before it scrolled out of view. Some of the responders lacked the expertise in HSIN to know how to scroll back through the dialog to see if they missed anything. As a result, vital information was missed and some resource and information requests were ignored. This led to delays in the socialization of key decisions, information and resource requests as first responders had to sift through previous posts to data mine this information.

Recommendation:

1) D14 should develop HSIN standard operating procedures that address the establishment of dedicated HSIN collaboration windows for senior leadership key decisions, requests for information, and internal/external resource requests.
2) Once established, incorporate HSIN SOP training for D14 and subordinate command IMT personnel. Consider holding a virtual MRO exercise could be held where the incident is managed only via desktop, in a virtual command post, using HSIN to provide the communications link. This exercise would familiarize every one of the capabilities and use of HSIN to manage a response and maintain situational awareness as well as command, control, and communications, while sharing a common operating picture between command posts.

Comment:

Title	Improve Use of Shared Web Applications
Recommended Action	Recommend follow-on action COMDT
Type of Contingency	MASS RESCUE OPERATIONS (MRO)
ICS Category	3 LOGISTICS SECTION
Core Component	Operate within management system
Recommended Action Area	Policy

Observation:

HSIN (based on Adobe Connect software) and the WebEOC applications used during the exercise effectively increased players' situational awareness and shared a common operating picture between command posts. They were used as unclassified systems to share response information such as passenger and crew manifests, draft and signed ICS forms, and a running log of events and actions. WebEOC was used by the cruiseline company to track the actions of the vessel and their emergency response center, and by the Disaster Medical Assist Team (DMAT) to track the hospitals the survivors were sent to, while the Coast Guard used HSIN to track its actions. Together the systems provided a very thorough picture of all of the actions being done. HSIN was particularly useful for our Liaison team in RMI, as communications were so poor via SatPhone.

Discussion:

The use of electronic display boards including Emergency Management software (HSIN) have been identified as best practices. They allow multiple emergency operations centers and their personnel to quickly and effectively share information crossing agency and jurisdictional boundaries. On the first day of the exercise JRCC had access to the WebEOC application used by the cruise line, which was helpful to see what the cruise ship had done to respond to the emergency and to get the passenger/crew manifest. Additionally, DMAT shared portions of their WebEOC application, but neither one gave full access to the USCG, or with each other. HSIN was made available to all responders, but due to the unfamiliarity with it, not everyone used it to its fullest extent. Using the latest technology to share situational awareness is needed, especially when having split command posts, but shouldn't completely replace manual printouts and displays within the command posts. Technology should be used to share the information, but perhaps is not the best way to display the information.

Lesson Learned/Best Practice:

A system needs to be identified which harnesses the latest technology to manage a response, sharing pertinent information in a timely and effective manner. Once the system is identified, responders need to train and exercise with it, so all are comfortable with it's use. If a WebEOC application is identified as the most commonly used application for this, with industry and partner agencies verse in its use, perhaps the USCG should adapt it and use it on a regular basis. If HSIN or another Adobe Connect product or one not in common use, is selected, the Government needs to make it readily available to our industry partners for their practice and use. The system needs to be flexible enough to allow responders access to it.
The unified command post should also include low tech options to share and display information. These options include:

1. Message forms for all UCP personnel to ensure the completion of key tasks, the passage of information and overall incident documentation.
2. Low tech display boards for all emergency operations center sections should be used to quickly observe situational awareness and as a backup to the emergency management software.

Recommendation:

A work group should be formed at headquarters to determine the best methods or program for electronically sharing an unclassified common operating picture between various response agencies, governments, and private industry which will address information sharing needs, maintain situational awareness of all parties, and provide a mechanism to share ICS documentation between separated command posts.

Comment:

18 Apr 2016: RAI assigned to CG-761 for review/comment. Need to define standard for what constitutes a common operating picture (COP) and the communications systems that support it.

Title	Review/Update Legal Annex - D14 OPLAN
Recommended Action	Recommend follow-on action District [CCGD 14]
Type of Contingency	MASS RESCUE OPERATIONS (MRO)
ICS Category	0 UNIFIED COMMAND
Core Component	Operate within management system
Recommended Action Area	Plans

Observation:
The Legal Annex to the OPLAN appears to be out-of-date and in need of review.

Discussion:
During exercise hot wash, the D14 Legal Officer commented that the Legal Annex to the CGD14 OPLAN 9840 may be out-of-date on a number of points.

Lesson Learned/Best Practice:
The Legal Annex to the OPLAN must be reviewed and updated.

Recommendation:
Review and update Legal Annex to the OPLAN 9840-14 with current references, MOUs, and legal authorities and responsibilities.

Comment:

Title	Add Prompt - Senior Leader Coord - MRO Plan/QRC
Recommended Action	No further action required
Type of Contingency	MASS RESCUE OPERATIONS (MRO)
ICS Category	0 UNIFIED COMMAND
Core Component	Personnel Support
Recommended Action Area	Plans

Observation:
During the mass rescue exercise, a lack of initial information flow between executive level leadership was noted.

Discussion:
At the onset of the exercise, it was noted that there was a gap in understanding and awareness between the commercial carrier, host country ambassador, and D14 senior level leadership. Specifically, the resource capability of each of the agencies and cruise line were not known initially and could be resolved during an initial phone conversation at the senior leadership level of each organization.

Lesson Learned/Best Practice:
MRO Plan should prompt command to initiate conversation between response agencies, commercial carrier, and host country ambassador.

Recommendation:
Add recommendation in the D14 MRO Plan to prompt senior level conversation on initial actions, expectations, and resource capabilities. Add line item in MRO Quick Response Card (QRC) to ensure this coordination takes place.

Comment:

Title	Review and Update Annex G - SAR Plan
Recommended Action	No further action required
Type of Contingency	MASS RESCUE OPERATIONS (MRO)
ICS Category	2 PLANNING SECTION
Core Component	Operate within management system
Recommended Action Area	Plans

Observation:
Available or potential resources were not easily accessible by the JRCC in the initial SAR response. Annex G to the National SAR Plan contains available resources, but didn't contain resource availability for RMI or other compact nations.

Discussion:
During the response phase in this exercise, nobody appeared to have specific information on RMI, either from Annex G or the SAR Plan. There was a lack of detailed information for RMI such as landing sites, resources, etc. If RMI develops an MRO Plan, a copy of the plan should be kept by the JRCC. If an IAP is developed for RMI as a tab to the District MRO Plan, that should be immediately accessible to the watch standers, and finally if each Sector was to develop an MRO plan, Sector Guam's plan would likely identify RMI resources, potential landing sites and family reception areas.

Lesson Learned/Best Practice:
Annex G to the SAR Plan (for either District or Sectors) should have a detailed list of available resources, their capabilities and contact information for cases within their AOR.

Recommendation:
D14 (drm) conduct a review of Annex G to the National SAR Plan to determine if additional or updated resource information is needed.

Comment:

Title	Improve Survivor Accountability Process for MRO
Recommended Action	No further action required
Type of Contingency	MASS RESCUE OPERATIONS (MRO)
ICS Category	0 UNIFIED COMMAND
Core Component	Operate within management system
Recommended Action Area	Plans

Observation:

The term "accountability" must be defined in the context of the entire MRO operation and a standardized methodology for tracking accountability should be developed.

Discussion:

Accountability of passengers/crew was initially maintained by the responsible party (RP) and shared with the JRCC. Within the Incident Command, accountability became a responsibility shared between the JRCC, Ops Section Survivor Accountability Branch, and the Planning Section Situation Unit. Each of these entities had its own methodologies and specifications for data they were tracking. This led to discrepancies and confusion.

The RP had the original manifest with all personnel information (names, nationalities, etc.) and tracked who went into each lifeboat/life raft. The RP manifest was provided to the JRCC from the RP Emergency Response Center (ERC).

The RP's accountability on the manifest was only accurate up to the point when people left the ship. Such items as medical status, destination, and current location (via inject) changed during the exercise, but was not tracked adequately within the IC's accountability system. Furthermore, as some of the survivors were transferred at sea from their liferafts/lifeboats to SAR assets (AMVER vessels), it was nearly impossible for the OSC (aircraft) to track each liferaft as they had no identifiable marking on them. Lifeboats had their IMO number on them, but the liferafts had no markings, which made it impossible to maintain detailed survivor accountability. Similarly, some liferafts were empty (activated when vessel sank) and some had survivors, but with no markings were difficult to identify by the SAR assets. Information such as number of people aboard, medical needs and number of deceased aboard was not immediately available to SAR assets and OSC.

Also, there was no standardized definition for "accountability" and what information needed to be tracked. For example, OPS viewed accountability as limited to personnel numbers, lifeboats, and response resources. However, the RP's accountability priorities included individual names, ages, medical conditions, next of kin, and other detailed data points. Having knowledge of each agency's accountability priorities (name vs numbers) will help keep information accurate. The RP's desire was to be able to identify by name the exact location (ie. lifeboat, landing site, hospital, shelter) of each survivor, while the Coast Guard's desire was to ensure all passengers and crew were recovered and only concentrated on numbers. Individual names, medical conditions, and next port of call data was never effectively managed. The management of the accountability was challenged with exercise injects which provided inconsistent information from the initial passenger manifest.

Lesson Learned/Best Practice:

1. Accountability is the most difficult challenge in an MRO and needs to be discussed and expectations of accountability managed communicated and agreed upon in advance.
2. No standard form or process to track accountability. While the cruiseship and lifeboats often use electronic scanning of ID cards to track accountability, and can produce a spreadsheet report, the response agencies has not developed a coordinated list of essential information (CBP may need citizenship and passport numbers, DMAT may need specific medical needs, and Coast Guard may need NOK information).
3. CG needs to understand that the RP has advanced accountability systems that they use regularly and procedures that we (CG) may be able to access during an MRO response.
4. Maintaining survivor accountability and medical conditions of those onboard liferafts/boats is additionally challenged by not having a liferaft marking system identified.

Recommendation:

5. MRO Plan should define accountability and identify specific roles, responsibilities for the Survivor Accountability Branch.
6. CG should identify what critical information is needed to be tracked on manifest, which should address the needs of each response agency so one master list is shared during a response.
7. CG should consider recommending to IMO the need to have a standardized marking system for liferafts to identify them from the air or sea, or having some type of mechanism to specifically identify each one (AIS transponder).

Comment:

18 Apr 2016: CG-CPE-3 elevated this issue to a District-level RAI, per discussion at the AAR Program Review Meeting.

Title	Improve Interagency Coordination of Aviation SAR
Recommended Action	No further action required
Type of Contingency	MASS RESCUE OPERATIONS (MRO)
ICS Category	1 OPERATIONS SECTION
Core Component	Operate within management system
Recommended Action Area	Performance

Observation:

During the senior level leadership discussion it was identified that in an MRO scenario, being a non-natural disaster, it would not trigger Foreign Assistance Act/Stafford Act and authorize DoD's involvement. Furthermore, USAID would not be activated as a Presidential Disaster Assessment would not be completed, and so USAID agreement for reimbursement would not be issued requesting federal agency response. Yet, the use of DOD air assets were essential in responding to critical medical needs of the survivors.

Discussion:

DoS and DoD have "triggers" in place which authorize their response to national disasters in countries within D14 AOR. However, without a US Presidential Disaster Assessment, and being a non-natural disaster, DOD response to an MRO from a cruise ship such as this scenario is not guaranteed, but essential.

Lesson Learned/Best Practice:

Normal authorities and responsibilities to bring federal resources to bear under the Foreign Assistance Act/Stafford Act were not able to be applied under the man-made disaster scenario of this exercise.

Recommendation:

Establish a working group at Headquarters to develop a means to obtain DoS/DoD aviation and logistical support during a SAR/MRO case caused by a man-made nationally declared disaster at one of our compact nations.

Comment:

18 Apr 2016: For CG-SAR review/comment.

Title	Clarify Policy on MRO Rafts
Recommended Action	No further action required
Type of Contingency	MASS RESCUE OPERATIONS (MRO)
ICS Category	0 UNIFIED COMMAND
Core Component	Equipment maintenance & support
Recommended Action Area	Policy

Observation:
There are transportation restraints on MRO rafts and so they were not used as a viable response resource during this exercise. However, with many persons in water (PIWs), their use would have saved lives.

Discussion:
Two MRO rafts prematurely deployed (one on a CG Aux aircraft and one on a UPS truck) and resulted in CG-711 not allowing CG aircraft to carry the currently available MRO rafts. The only permitted way to transport MRO rafts is by vehicle and boat. Additionally, MRO rafts were a one-time purchase with no recurring CG funding for maintaining readiness (testing, inspection and training). Occasionally, command center watch standers still ask that CG aircraft to carry and drop these rafts to PIWs. Some CG partners are unaware the MRO rafts exist, or the current issues with air deployment. Deployment of these rafts during this exercise would have been a viable option to rescue the PIWs. However, the option wasn't pursued due to the restriction on using them.

Lesson Learned/Best Practice:
Ensure that all CG and partners know the rafts exist and the constraints on the raft's transport.

Recommendation:
CG-711 should provide guidance to either scrap the MRO rafts or to fund commercially-performed 5-yr testing and inspection. If rafts stay, put inventory numbers in D14 MRO Plan, train on deployment, and consider as viable resource during exercises and MRO/SAR responses.

Comment:
18 Apr 2016: Initial comment requested from CG-SAR. CG-711 & 41 also have equities in this issue.

Title	RMI's MRO Appendix - Natural Disaster Plan
Recommended Action	Information only
Type of Contingency	MASS RESCUE OPERATIONS (MRO)
ICS Category	0 UNIFIED COMMAND
Core Component	Operate within management system
Recommended Action Area	Plans

Observation:

RMI doesn't have an MRO appendix to their Natural Disaster Plan. An MRO appendix could compliment the aviation disaster plan by laying out a response strategy to manage a sudden influx of maritime disaster survivors into RMI. The plan should concentrate on identifying and staffing a landing site to organize survivors and conduct medical triage, establishing a reception center to shelter and process the survivors and establishing a transportation and security plan. The MRO appendix should establish a response management organizational structure, identifying a lead agency (incident commander) and how it would interact with the EOC. Once established, this document could be shared with the USCG to reference during an MRO response, so the Unified Command established on Oahu and the cruiseship ERC understands the process in RMI.

Discussion:

The RMI government has expressed a desire to create an MRO plan for a scenario where there are many people needing rescuing from the water (floods, vessel casualty, aircraft ditching, tsunami, etc.). During the exercise the CG-LNO and the CG PVSS assisted the RMI ministers to come up with a command and control structure for the MRO which identified the following;

1. Port Authority – lead – landing sites for the disaster victims (Incident Commander)
2. Minister of Health – lead – Triage at both the landing site and again at the hospital.
3. Ministry of Transportation/Ministry of Public Safety – co-leads – Transportation of passengers/crew on land.
4. Dept of Education – lead – Sheltering of passengers and crew**.**
5. Ministry of Public Safety – lead - Security
6. Ministry of Finance/Ministry of Immigration along with US Embassy – Accountability.

This information should be captured and memorialized into a plan to ensure consistency in future MRO situations.

Lesson Learned/Best Practice:

Having an MRO appendix included in the RMI's National Disaster Plan with a pre-determined organization structure, proposed objectives, potential list of resources and contacts, etc., ensures a more effective and rapid response.

Recommendation:

7. The RMI government now understands that a declaration of national disaster needs to be issued on the first day of an event to open up the UN and US government's assistance. RMI should include this process as one of the steps in their MRO plan.
8. D14 should assist Majuro in developing their MRO appendix, then share similar model to FSM and Palau to ensure consistency within the region.

Comment:

Title	Clarify Liaison Officer Role in the D14 MRO Plan
Recommended Action	No further action required
Type of Contingency	MASS RESCUE OPERATIONS (MRO)
ICS Category	0.4.3 Liaison
Core Component	Operate within management system
Recommended Action Area	Plans

Observation:

Liaison officers played a vital role (especially in RMI) in establishing & enhancing the communications between the command posts and fostering cooperation. The role of liaison officer (LNO) was not adequately defined or communicated to the LNOs before deployment, and at least a two person team was necessary and was very effective.

Discussion:

The D14 LNO was essential to the success of the RMI EOC communicating with the UC. This needs to be at least a two person team, with adequate resources and direction. The LNO position should be better defined within the D14 MRO Plan for response to command posts in locations outside the Sector Guam and Sector Honolulu AORs. The liaison officer should be formed by at least a two person team from the D14 staff who have knowledge of the AOR, a working knowledge of ICS and HSIN and include at a minimum one unclassified SAT phone, standalone laptop computer and a portable printer. The go-kit and equipment are vital to the success of any response based away from the normal work space. The unclassified SAT phone and standalone computer were absolutely essential to the success of the RMI government EOC playing in the exercise. There were no established phone lines the first day of the exercise, in the space the EOC was operating out of. SAT phone communications were able to be established between the JRCC and RMI EOC, and with the use of the standalone computer HSIN connectivity along with e-mail, were also established.

Lesson Learned/Best Practice:

Having D14 LNOs already established and properly equipped to carry out their expected role in the D14 AOR will ensure a much better use of D14 resources during any incident that would require their service. This exercise would have been very difficult to execute without the LNOs in place (especially in RMI), establishing lines of communication to the Unified Command Post and explaining the response to the RMI EOC.

Recommendation:

1. Have go-kits ready to deploy: Portable equipment/rolling pelican cases/laptops, poster printers, Iridium phones, etc. Include large sized pre-printed and laminated ICS forms and Planning P displays (meeting agendas, etc…)
2. Designate CG LNOs at D14 with experience in ICS & MRO response and ensure they are equipped / trained with the needed IT equipment. Include position on WQSB.
3. Describe roles and responsibilities of the LNOs better in the MRO Plan

Comment:

Title	Approve Use of Non-Supported Communication Systems
Recommended Action	Recommend follow-on action COMDT
Type of Contingency	MASS RESCUE OPERATIONS (MRO)
ICS Category	0 UNIFIED COMMAND
Core Component	Communications
Recommended Action Area	Policy

Observation:
The need to use non-supported standalone laptops and desktops in RMI required the establishment of a g-mail account to provide written communications and documentation between the command posts.

Discussion:
Maintaining communications via e-mail and instant messaging is essential during responses using multi-agency, international governments and private companies. Under current policy, if a CG supported laptop is used in a foreign country such as RMI, the use of a CAC card to access CG mail accounts is prohibited, so the only work around is the creation of an external e-mail account (ie. G-mail). The need to use unsanctioned communications methods such as g-mail or Facebook messenger is an absolute necessity when communicating from a foreign country in the D14 AOR.

Lesson Learned/Best Practice:
There needs to be available, alternate and approved methods of communications available to D14 personnel when dispatched especially to a foreign country. Coast Guard workstations are not often available and due to their rigid security standards are virtually useless in communicating with outside government agencies during an MRO response. Similar DOD workstations have allowed access to private e-mail and Facebook, yet CG does not.

Recommendation:
CGHQ: Develop policy which allows for better connectivity via instant messaging and CG mail for laptops brought to foreign countries for official use.

Comment:
18 Apr 2016: RAI to be assigned to CG-64 for review/comment.

Title	Share D14 MRO Plan IAP Supplements
Recommended Action	Information only
Type of Contingency	MASS RESCUE OPERATIONS (MRO)
ICS Category	0.4.3 Liaison
Core Component	Operate within management system
Recommended Action Area	Performance

Observation:

The US Embassy was forward-leaning in assisting both the CG Liaison and RMI Government in taking the crew and passenger list and setting up a process to get the passengers and crew back to the U.S.

Discussion:

The US Embassies in countries in the D14 AOR play a vital role in assisting US victims in repatriating US citizens and assisting in their accountability in an MRO scenario. They also assist and advise the country's EOC during emergencies and assist D14 LNOs when assigned. It is important to share with them any plan or IAP produced concerning the country that the US Embassy operates in.

Lesson Learned/Best Practice:

Sharing the D14 MRO Plan and/or supplemental IAPs with stakeholders, especially with the US Embassies from the Pacific Islands in the D14 AOR, that will likely be part of a MRO response, will increase the effectiveness of the response by all involved.

Recommendation:

Best practice: D14 MRO Plans and IAP supplements need to be shared with the US embassies once they are produced.

Comment:

Title	Establish Good Points of Contact for Key Officials
Recommended Action	Information only
Type of Contingency	MASS RESCUE OPERATIONS (MRO)
ICS Category	0 UNIFIED COMMAND
Core Component	Notifications
Recommended Action Area	Plans

Observation:

The RMI Government officials, such as the Director of the Disaster Committee, did not receive essential e-mails from the JRCC. In many cases, the CG LNO served as a conduit for vital information. However, from watch to watch, the issue addressed by the e-mail seemed to get dropped and remained unresolved. A better understanding of key government positions and contact information would have helped.

Discussion:

USCG D14 JRCC should review their government official contact list that they maintain for SAR cases to ensure phone numbers and e-mail addresses for each country's EOC and Director of Disaster Committee are included. In MRO scenarios, it is likely a national disaster will be declared and additional members of government may need to be added to e-mails. At the very least, the country's director of their Disaster Committee who would be establishing the country's EOC should be included.

Lesson Learned/Best Practice:

Good communications is essential for a good response, and should be established in the early stages. A complete list of e-mail addresses, phone numbers, and some sort of title of individual should be complete and updated on a regular basis.

Recommendation:

Best practice: Conduct regular reviews of government contact list for RMI to ensure key government positions associated with an MRO are included in the list.

Comment: