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2nd Quarter 2020



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FROM THE DESKS OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

From the Desk of the President

Hello Fellow Squad Members!!!! Sure hope all is well and been praying for all..... Never in my wildest dream would I have thought we would have to have cancelled a quarterly meeting. Weather yes, disaster yes, and some facility conflict at last minute yes. A Global Health crisis never. That completely caught me off guard. But it is where we are and I will address some concerns I have at the end of my letter.

With the 2nd quarterly meeting being cancelled the executive board has decided to award all the grants that were supposed to be passed out. Some squads has contacted us and their checks have been mailed. Anybody that is still waiting, please get Debbie the info and we will expedite the payment ASAP. With that don't forget the deadline for the next round and get those request in.

Unfortunately we had to cancel the spring training exercise as well. Moving forward we should be able to meet in August but as many know the guidelines and recommendations have changed often. So we will make every effort and may have to do some type of video meeting as well. I would sure like everybody's opinion as to see how to move forward and then of course that brings conference into play as well. Rest assured we are thinking every scenario through.

Was not much of a legislative session this year. But we are still optimistic that something may get in a special session if Governor Ivey calls any.

Now to Covid-19, I have not put any information out as far as guidelines because how fluid the situation has been. I think all of you are well informed and make good sound decisions on the well be of your members and squads. I was contacted early on what could the state count on the rescue squads being able to do. Then right behind that the stock pile of PPE was not there and what was there has been out of date for some time and now the hospitals were put in a very bad situation. So I created a survey and **TRIED** emailing to see how everyone was doing and making sure that we as the executive board did not need to intercede. **NOTE I SAID TRIED.....** I was very disappointed in the fact that the database that Debbie had was so unacceptable.

We hear at almost every quarterly meeting and conference communication communication. We even done an all call, posted on Facebook page, Placed on Web page that I would be sending out survey. Of the current 89 squads that are members I only received 38 responses back. Now that comes as we just have had renewals and the information was supposed to be up to date. I proposed at conference of getting a state wide communication tool that we could use. I asked at conference for everyone to give me feedback as ask about pros and cons. Then in my letter the first of the year I told everyone that I had very little interest in it and just could not see spending money on it. So Chauncey has still been busy every single day looking out for the squads. I know all of have seen how much money the state

has been awarded for purchases of critical items. But I don't know where to begin when the legislators ask how many squads is in the association, how many responded back and I have to tell those 30%. You know how far that is going get looked at. I asking and looking for input. Please tell me what it is going to take.

As always when I close, I ask and will continue to ask, please let the executive board know what we can do to help. I do want everyone to stay safe. This has really been an eye opening experience for me. I do look forward to meeting in August.

God Bless and Prayers for Everyone.

Matthew Knight
President

From the Desk of the 1st Vice President

I hope letter finds you and your family in good health. I know all of the squads are still running calls even during this difficult time. Some are probably running even more calls than usual because a lot of the "non-essentials" are getting bored and are out roaming the woods. The AARS never stops working, because we are 911. We still have to answer the tones. I have been asked by several people if we are still responding to calls during the shut down. I said of course we are if we didnt then who would.

We will have a lot to catch up on since we will not be having a second quarterly meeting. The officers will still be meeting between now and the August meeting, keeping our 6 ft distance of course. We will try to make sure we keep your associations business taken care of.

If you have any questions or needs of your officers between now and the next meeting please feel free to contact one of us. Remember we are here to serve you. Cant wait to see you all again at the August meeting. Please stay safe and remember this is your association, get involved and make a difference.

Brian Bailey
1st Vice President



FROM THE DESKS OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

From the Desk of the 2nd Vice President

Hello, we hope all is doing well. We are all experiencing a bit of an unusual "normal" but we hope you all are taking this seriously and taking the safety precautions they have suggested. For many of us we are considered essential workers and don't have a choice to be on the frontlines. We apologize for having to cancel spring training, it looked like we were going to have a good turn out and the May meeting, but everyone's safety is important. Our next meeting will be in August, we hope we are somewhat back to normal by then. I have started working on conference, so if you would like something or have suggestions please let us know. Remember this is your conference, you will get out of it what you put in it. We would love to have great participation from each squad. We have instructors that come and give of their time to help keep up on training and informed on changes that may occur. We hope to see everyone at the August meeting. Until then spend time with family, train hard and stay safe.

Jason Heard
2nd Vice President

1st Quarterly Meeting
February 15, 2020
Alexander City

Colors posted by the Honor Guard
Opening prayer by Hoyt McCaghren
Special Guests:
Ed Oliver – Rep Tallapoosa County
Jim Ziglar – AL State Auditor
Joe Little – ALEA
Vance Wood – AL Dept of Conservation Game & Fish
Ricky King – Spire
Meeting called to order by Matthew Knight
Roll was called with 53 squads represented.
Motion made by Sartec to excuse Ider Rescue Squad. Motion was seconded by LASAR. Motion carried.
Motion to dispense title reading of the minutes made by Desoto Rescue Squad. Motion was seconded by East Colbert Rescue Squad. Motion carried.
Financial report was read and motion to accept was made by Desoto Rescue Squad. Motion was seconded by LASAR. Motion carried.
Chauncey spoke about the legislation
Brian had one new squad to present – Brierfield Fire-Rescue. Inspected by Brian and Executive Board recommended. Motion to accept by Athens – Limestone Rescue Squad. Motion was seconded by Winston County Search and Dive Team. Motion carried.
Workman's Comp through VFIS should be around \$12.00 - \$13.00/person and the paperwork should be in the mid-year renewal packet. Need to get the paperwork filled out and sent back in along with the money as soon as possible.
State Dive Team project leader will be Ray Hogans from LASAR
Jason spoke about Spring training. Date is March 22nd and it will be water search and recovery. Rain date will be April 18th. Will be hosted by Etowah County Rescue Squad
Ways and Means Committee approved several grants to be presented.
May meeting. Just remember before grant checks can be issued all receipts or purchase orders must be sent in. No checks will be issued without this.
Rescuer of the Quarter presented to Robert Shook from Scottsboro – Jackson County Rescue Squad.
With no further business to discuss the meeting was adjourned.
Thanks to Tallaco K-9 Unit for hosting the 1st Quarterly meeting.
Look forward to seeing you all at the 2nd Quarterly meeting hosted by Ider

ALL REQUESTS FOR AARS ASSISTANCE OUTSIDE OF YOUR COUNTY SHOULD COME FROM THE INCIDENT COMMANDER OF THE SCENE AND GO THROUGH A MEMBER OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

- **2020 2nd QUARTER MAGAZINE DEADLINE: JULY 1, 2020**
- **ANY ARTICLE SUBMITTED AFTER THE DEADLINE IS SUBJECT TO BE PLACED IN NEXT QUARTER'S MAGAZINE!**
- **The Electronic Version contains the ads and articles and can be found on the AARS Website or by subscribing by sending an email to rescuer@alars.org please include your name and Squad.**
- **THE EDITOR RESERVES THE RIGHT TO EDIT ANY ARTICLE SUBMITTED**
- **ARTICLES SHOULD BE SENT USING THE EDITOR LINK ON THE AARS WEBSITE OR TO editor@alars.org**
- **Be sure to check the Website regularly for updated information about things of interest.**

<http://www.alars.org>



PRESS RELEASE:

Brierfield Fire and Rescue, Inc. recently obtained a new EMS response vehicle that has been purposely outfitted to respond to EMS non-transport calls. This unit also includes \$24,000 in state-of-the-art extrication tools, provided by a grant from **Firehouse Subs**.

Our old EMS unit has been donated to the **Huntsville Cave Rescue Unit (HCRU)**, based in Huntsville, Alabama. HCRU is an entirely volunteer organization specializing in cave, cliff, high-angle and rough terrain search and rescue operations in north Alabama and surrounding states.

Both Brierfield and Huntsville are members of **The Alabama Association of Rescue Squads (AARS)**. This association is made up of 111 rescue units with over 3,000 members located throughout the state of Alabama.

According to board president, Jimmy Latham, Brierfield's policy is to "pass on" any unneeded vehicles to other organizations thru the **Terry Farrell Firefighter's Fund of Alabama**. The Terry Fund is a firefighter charity established after the World Trade Center attacks on 9-11. Terry Farrell was serving for the FDNY on Rescue 4 when he was killed during these attacks. Brierfield Fire Chief Spruce McRee is the Alabama director for the fund.

*Attached are several photos of our new EMS unit and the donation of the old unit to Huntsville.
On the donation photo, the individuals are listed below left to right:*

Brierfield Fire & Rescue EMS Director: Lt Jackson Chance
Huntsville Cave Rescue: Board Chair Tommy MacPherson
Huntsville Cave Rescue: Chief of Operations Brain Bailey
Brierfield Fire & Rescue: Chief Spruce McRee

BRIERFIELD FIRE AND RESCUE
P.O. BOX 1
18567 Highway 139
BRIERFIELD, AL 35035



LASAR SARSAR Event
Submitted by: LASAR

While driving over the Lillian bridge one early Saturday morning, you notice a small plane flying low and erratic in the distance. You slow down and wonder what the pilot is thinking when suddenly the plane seems to disappear into the wooded area toward Blue Angel Recreation Park. Pulling off the road, you call 911 to report what you have seen. This was the real-world scenario for the South Alabama Rescue Search and Recovery (SARSAR) multi-agency drill held Saturday, Feb. 22. Hosted by Lower Alabama Search and Rescue (LASAR), this multi-agency drill included participants from the US Coast Guard, US Coast Guard Auxiliary, Civil Air Patrol, Etowah County Search and Rescue, ALEA Marine Police Division, US National Reserve Corps, Lillian Volunteer Fire Department (LVFD), Orange Beach Fire and Rescue, Perdido Beach Fire Department, Florida State Parks Division, Escambia Search and Rescue (ESAR) and civilian volunteers. 911 was informed of a simulated small plane crash with missing and injured passengers about 6:30 a.m. in the Lillian Perdido Bay area. Emergency units from South Alabama and Escambia County, Florida, were requested to respond and began moving to the command and staging area at the Lillian Boat Launch. Six hours and 40 minutes later, all injured passengers and plane debris were located and responding teams were heading back to their home locations. First on scene were LVFD and LASAR based in Lillian. The boat launch was soon filled with emergency vehicles and boats from these units. The first safety and mission briefing was at 8 a.m. Nine units were on site and given search assignments and areas. By 8:45, more than 140 personnel, ranging in LASAR Hosts Drill for Several Agencies One of several boat teams prepare to deploy as part of the LASAR-hosted emergency drill on Feb. 22. from teens to 70s, from various government and state agencies on land and water were searching a 60 square mile area of Perdido Bay south of the Lillian Bridge and shoreline. The search also included two fixed wing aircraft from the Civil Air Patrol and six search and dive operation boats. Lieutenant Commander Trevor Blount of the US Coast Guard was Incident Commander, heading the search effort. "The exercise was created to enhance the interoperability of federal, state, local and volunteer agencies to build out and refine search and rescue capability in the coastal region," Blount said. He indicated the USCG had limited resources and without the assistance of local units like those responding in the drill, it would be more difficult to respond to all emergencies. He also commented at the close of the drill that it was an outstanding effort by all units responding. LASAR Unit Commander Ray Hogans was the Deputy Incident Commander for the exercise. The LASAR command bus acted as the main command and communications center for the drill. LASAR members manned the radios, receiving status updates from search teams every 20 minutes. Three LASAR boats were deployed along with their dive team. LASAR members were also the "injured passengers" for the drill and were secretly put in place before the search teams were deployed. LASAR also supplied food, soft drinks and water for responders. Hogans said, "Drills like this one give us a chance to practice for a major event because it is not if but when something happens and we need to be ready." LVFD Assistant Chief Joe Jones deployed his team of about 18 members to search on the Lillian side of the bay. Their fire suppression and rescue boat #37 searched the bay and their engine and squad units assisted with land searches. Their team also set up a triage and medical tent in case a responder was injured. US National Reserve Corp General Gregory Bone deployed his team of about 15 members to search on land using their command truck to reach the search area. He said USNRC, which has over 10,000 members nationally, normally respond to natural emergencies like hurricanes. This drill scenario gave them an opportunity to train in skills they do not get to use often. Civil Air Patrol Lieutenant Coronel Harvey Yarborough drove from Mississippi to participate. His team of about 10 local members participated in land searches that had them walking through thigh-high mud as they successfully searched for the plane. Yarborough commented it was amazing to get this many agencies working together so well on the first major drill. Anne Marie Ozkosar, public information officer with the LVFD, said their 32 volunteers were excited to coordinate with the other groups and learn from this experience. Orange Beach Fire and Rescue Chief Bruce Nelson led a team of about 10 members. This included their public safety dive team, their dive trailer, police boat and their fireboat. They also brought the mass casualty incident trailer which is a county resource but is housed at their station. Commander O.B. Pettit's Escambia Search and Rescue unit was based on the Pensacola side at Blue Angel Recreation Park. Their group of over 50 members included K-9 teams, search drone, command and communications truck, medical team and 4-wheelers. USCG Auxiliary arrived on site with their boat and crew to search to bay and shoreline. John Cornelius, chaplain for the Etowah County Rescue Squad, and two other members drove from Gadsden to assist. Park Manager Kiersten Wilson of the Florida Park Service was also onsite. The park service gave valuable support for the drill, allowing the use of parkland to stage aircraft debris and injured personnel. National Disaster Response Agency Field Operations Supervisor Michael Ziolkowski and Field Operations Diver Tyler Giblin joined one of the LASAR boat crews in the search. They were in Foley training dogs to join their K-9 search teams when they heard about the drill. Being in the area, they said they just couldn't miss a big drill like this one Working in the newspaper business is always a learning experience. You get to meet fantastic people and see and do some things you wouldn't normally get to do. Attending the media briefing as part of LASAR's mock drill day on Feb. 22 was no exception. I had no idea what to expect for an operation of this size, and I can't begin to tell you how impressed and fascinated I was with every aspect of the drill. I learned this was the first time the Lillian-based LASAR unit had ever planned and hosted a multiagency training exercise. I learned what lengths our area agencies and volunteers go to for practice, education and being there when citizens need a hand, no matter the situation. It was overwhelming in some ways to me as an outsider, but I appreciated how well things were coordinated and arranged. I'm sure things may have been different in an actual emergency, but not by much. Practice like this is invaluable to these groups and in turn, it is invaluable to the rest of us. During this briefing and while touring the command center, I was amazed by the organization, professionalism and dedication of every participant I met or observed. Then it occurred to me how much time and planning this event required. Ray Hogans, commander of LASAR, said they began planning about six months ago, keeping only a few key leaders in the loop so the majority of volunteers and participants wouldn't know what to expect. A fuselage was created to make the scenario more realistic and a number of items were placed in or near Perdido Bay for the teams to find and report back on. This kept the command center extremely busy, as teams had to report in every 20 minutes with a situation report or any time they found a potential piece of evidence. Formal updates were written and were available for media, just as in a real disaster. The search site was divided into six sectors and most had two agencies working together in their assigned area. The coordination between water, land, drone and aviation teams provided invaluable training. Even though this was the first time LASAR had planned such a drill, given the scope and number of participants, it is apparent we are in good hands. Space doesn't permit listing everyone who participated, but I am in awe of these incredible volunteers. No matter what agency they are part of, every single person that I met that day demonstrated how they go above and beyond to provide assistance in whatever way they can. We are very fortunate to have these volunteers who willingly share their knowledge and skills, attend more training to improve or learn new procedures and are always on standby whenever a call goes out. If you know any of the LASAR team members or anyone serving as a volunteer for other local first responder groups in this area, give them a big, heartfelt thanks.



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