



Disaster Mobilization Exercise 2015 April 25

The Day in Timeline and Pictures

On April 25th, 2015, the South County Airport Pilot Association (SCAPA) Disaster Airlift Response Team (DART) held a mobilization exercise to build competence and maintain currency of its operation. In partnership with local emergency management agencies and regional pilots and dedicated support of the pilots at South County, an excellent exercise ensued. A storm that rolled in the night before was just beginning to clear out that morning, adding a further touch of realism and complication to the day. Here is the story of the exercise as told through its time line and many pictures contributed from Hayman Tam of Belmont CERT, Dick Filson of Stockton, Vikas Kapur of the Santa Clara County Airmen's Association, and other participants.

7:30AM: Mock earthquake occurs.

7:36AM: DART management team communications begin.

7:42AM: Initial inquiries are sent out to local agencies who are likely to observe the need for disaster airlift response services.

7:50AM: 5 members of the DART management team have communicated and formed an incident response team.

8:05AM: FRS/GMRS radio call in – didn't happen. It was double-scheduled on a single person who could only had enough time to do one thing.

8:06AM: The Gilroy Emergency Operations Center requests SCAPA DART assistance in responding to and recovering from the incident

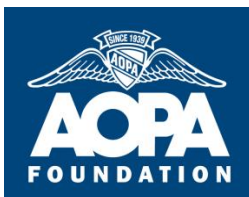
8:20AM: Pilot Dick Filson of Stockton gets the call that the planned DART plane is grounded in San Martin due to the exiting storm, and can he scramble and pick up a Cal Trans Dept of Aeronautics employee from McClellan. He responds yes and mobilizes.

8:25AM: Nathan Rainey of the City of Palo Alto Office of Emergency Services sends in email request from his 4G LTE DROID device advising that City of Palo Alto employees stranded in Gilroy may go to the San Martin airport and request transport to Palo Alto Airport.

8:30AM: Gilroy OES and Morgan Hill CERT and Morgan Hill OES arrive at the airport volunteering to help the operation.



8:40AM: The DART hangar is opened to reveal an operations center prepackaged and ready to roll out to the operations area. Set up begins. Special thanks to the County of Santa Clara, Supervisor Mike Wasserman, Roads and Airports Head Michael Murdter, Acting Head of County Airports Eric Petersen, and Airport Staffer Patrick McGuinness for arranging the use of a County Hangar at no charge to SCAPA DART. Thanks to our sponsors Northrop Grumman Corporation (\$5000) and the AOPA Foundation (\$10,000) whose generous grants made possible the acquisition of all this equipment.





Matériel Manager Pat Belanger and Medical Transport Manager Mike Gericke start setting up the operations tent



Phil Willis and Jim Petersen tow the portable generator over to the operations area.



SCAPA President and Ramp Manager Jim Petersen, Donations Manager Phil Willis, and Flight Operations Manager Mark van Wyk set up the communications antennas for amateur radio and an aviation base station.



8:54AM: The DART Managers' binders are out on the table so that the management team has a reference on what each person needs to do to make the operation work well.



9:30AM: Rod Pharis (facing) and Paul Marshall confer about the day's events. The gate opening is running about 45 minutes behind schedule.



9:31AM: The Zerweck family Cessna is pulled out on the taxiway and ready to go at San Jose International GA hangars.



9:32AM: Volunteer SCCA Pilot Ralph Zerweck prepares to climb aboard his Cessna to make the short hop to San Martin.



9:43AM: The Zerwecks taxi for a departure at 30 Left at San Jose International while a landing airliner has just crossed the threshold.



9:45AM: Radio Communications Manager Terry Cummings establishes communications links with Gilroy and Morgan Hill Emergency Operations Centers. He can't quite reach the Palo Alto mobile ground unit. One radio communicates to local air traffic on the CTAF, and the other unit communicates on the VHF frequencies used by regional emergency services for inter-agency communication.



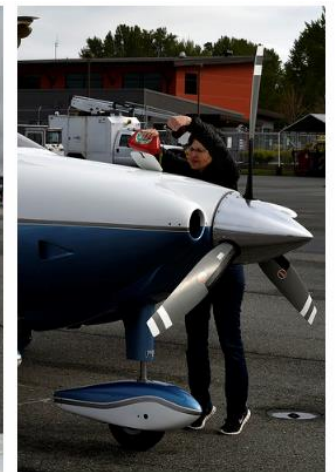
9:44AM: The Zerwecks hold short of runway 30L at San Jose International awaiting departure clearance from the tower.



The Cornwall Chuch study group bands together with the manager of their local Fred Meyers grocery store to make a food donation to the St Joseph's Family Center in Gilroy that is benefitting from all the food transported and collected during the SCAPA DART mobilization exercise



They transported their food in a member's car to the Bellingham airport where...



Bette and Michael Gardner had volunteered to fly a food donation down to South County airport to support the DART mobilization.



9:48AM: Taxiing out to the runway for departure.



9:52AM: Pilot Bette and husband Michael Gardner take off from Bellingham Washington with their load of food for the SCAPA DART disaster mobilization.



9:59AM: The Zerwecks and Vikas Kapur on a right downwind midfield for landing runway 32 at South County San Martin airport. The operations tent is the white speck at the edge of the ramp next to the left access road. The airport is conveniently situated next to the highway 101 one of California's main north-south transportation arteries.



10:04AM: Ramp Operations Manager Jim Peterson gets some plastic bags to consolidate food transport, while Pat Moore of Monterey County OES and Gilroy Amateur Radio Emergency Services (ARES) discusses radio communication issues with Terry Cummings (behind Jim).



10:06AM: Vikas Kapur and Ralph Zerweck of the Santa Clara County Airman's association walking toward the DART Operations tent with food donations for check in and assignment.



10:12AM: Mobilization Photographers Vikas Kapur and Hayman Tam pause from their duties for a photo. Thanks for the many pictures, Vikas and Hayman!



10:17AM: The operations center has been erected, all managers have their stations set up, a secure perimeter has been established, and Operations Director Paul Marshall conducts a final management readiness check prior to opening the airport gate to the non-flying public to provide emergency transportation service and to take on additional non-airport DART volunteers.



10:30AM: Volunteers are being signed in for duty by Teri Pharis at the volunteer sign in desk. The local CERTs (Community Emergency Response Teams) from Morgan Hill and Gilroy participated both as volunteers to man the duty stations, as donors of food, and as passengers to be flown in missions simulating ambulatory medical transport and evacuation. Although we did not simulate it during the exercise, CERT also stood ready to help the local population get to the airport, and to deliver goods and people from the airport to places where they were needed in the community.



11:04AM: Phil Willis checks in volunteers' food donations into the shipping log. Each item is weighed and logged so that the flight operations manager can assign it to a flight and utilize the available payload of the volunteer's plane.

| DART MATERIEL IDENTIFICATION LABEL | | | |
|--|---|----|----------|
| Receipt Number: | 001 | | |
| Contents Description: | Canned goods / glass Tomatoes TISSUE / MACADON 1 | | |
| From: (name, organization, address, telephone number) | E1-6 | | |
| TO: (Airport, name, organization, address, telephone number) | E1-6 | | |
| Number of pieces, Load #: | Box | of | / Load # |
| Weight: (lb) | 41.1 | | |

A label is placed on each item so that the ramp crew can use the Aircraft load sheet to identify which items from the pile go into which airplanes for transport. The ramp crew will assign the Load # from the load sheet that will be prepared later.



11:10AM: Pilot Dick Filson and passenger Colette Armao of the California Department of Transportation fly above the clouds of the departing storm on their way to South County Airport in San Martin CA from McClellan Airport in Sacramento.



11:07AM: Flight Operations Manager Mark van Wyk introduces City of Palo Alto employees Beth Minter and Chris Carvalho to pilot Ralph Zerweck and his wife Susan. Beth and Chris are Gilroy residents who might need a flight ride to Palo Alto airport in order to go to work during a disaster which impairs regional surface transportation. In this exercise, they will fly to the airport, check in with the Emergency services staff there, and then turn around and fly home.



11:36AM: Roy Shackel of Gilroy Fire and the Gilroy Office of Emergency Services observes the action. Gilroy provided support by activating the Emergency Operation Center and establishing radio communications with the DART Operations Center, and also provided a mock request to bring in 20 emergency workers which was not fulfilled.



11:36AM: Marjorie Bachman, one of three members of the WEACTION (Watsonville Emergency Airlift Command Team) who were providing mutual support in the SCAPA DART operations tent, assists Flight Operations Manager Mark van Wyk (out of picture to left) in giving a pilot briefing to Mike O'Leary (seated) and Bob Tucknott of the Alameda County Sheriff's Air Squadron, who were also providing mutual aid to SCAPA that day. Bob and Larry were tasked with flying an ambulatory medical patient to the Stanford Hospital, via the Palo Alto Airport and surface transportation provided by the City of Palo Alto Emergency Services staff. Marjorie is also an ATP and one of the first women graduates of the Air Force Academy. Bob is also the president of the Western States Association of Sheriff's Air Squadrons.



11:36AM: Mark van Wyk and Marjorie Bachman fill out the Aircraft Load Sheet for the Stanford Hospital flight. They reference the Pilot and Aircraft Information Sheet which tells them how much weight the plane can carry and what kind of credentials the pilot has. They also reference the passenger sign in log to learn more about the weight of the passengers and other information.



11:38AM: Materiel Manager Pat Belanger has just about completed logging in all the materiel to be flown in missions for the day. Today the materiel is principally food donations which will be given to the St Joseph's Family Center in Gilroy. The many separate donations allow us to practice logging in materiel, weighing it, labeling it, storing it on the ramp, matching it to aircraft via the Aircraft Load Sheet, and loading it on the plane with the Ramp Crew using the Aircraft Load Sheet as a picking guide to know which items to put into the plane. We kept separate shipping and receiving logs for materiel shipped out on planes, and received from planes.



11:41AM: Colette Armao, seated at left in black, a planner with the California Department of Transportation Aeronautics Division, signs in at the Volunteer Sign-in Desk. She is checked in by Recruitment Manager Mike Brogley and assistant Teri Pharis. Rod Pharis, the author of the DARP (Disaster Airlift Response Plan) and DART Co-Chair, and External Agencies Liaison Manager, looks on standing at right.



11:45:AM: We used flat bed wagons with 2" raised edges to ferry cargo around the ramp. These ones are of rather low quality, with only 2 out of 3 units making it through a full day of light duty.



12:04PM: Larry Timmer (right) and Kristen Gregory (facing away) of the Napa County Sheriff's Air Squadron speak with Daniel Bloecher, WEACT Materiel Manager, during a quiet moment of the day. Larry and Kristen flew food loads, and Daniel helped at the Materiel desk.



12:30AM: PM Dick Filson and Juliette Rossi on the way to the San Joaquin General Hospital located in French Camp a few minutes from the Stockton airport.



12:47PM: Jim Petersen and CERT member Larry Carr help load Larry Timmer's plane with a couple hundred pounds of food for a local round trip mission.



12:51PM: The Palo Alto Emergency Services mobile command center looks right at home in the Stanford Hospital Emergency Room parking lot. Overall, it took us about 1.5 hours from check-in to delivery to get this ambulatory patient to the emergency room, with ground transportation and pilot and hospital staff all pre-cleared to accept and support the operation.



12:59PM: Jim Petersen and Larry Timmer secure part of the load that Larry will carry so that it will not become a safety hazard during the flight.



1:20PM: Getting a look at an emergency room gurney in the ambulance garage at San Joaquin General Hospital. Elapsed time from sign in desk to Emergency room door was about 2 hours. The special gurney points out a limitation of medical transport by General Aviation aircraft – GA aircraft generally can't support a patient on a stretcher, nor do they carry medical staff nor supplies to assist in treatment during transport, so that the most seriously hurt people who most need transport may not be able to be wisely transported in GA aircraft. Further, in a real disaster, it does not do an overall service to deliver moderately injured people to a hospital that is already overrun with critically injured people needing service. Finally, given the time delay involved, there is increased risk of death due to non-timely treatment of a seriously injured person in medical transport. In a real emergency, GA aircraft need to ensure that any medical transport offered is safe, beneficial, and adds value to the overall disaster response. In this exercise, we had a pilot and former ambulance driver coordinating hospital transport, and would look to transport in a real emergency in a way that benefits local residents without impeding the larger effort, in coordination with local emergency and medical response professionals. We will continue to research and better understand this issue.



1:40PM: The St Joseph's Family Center van showed up to take delivery of the food donations brought in during the day. Totals were relatively modest, about 498 pounds for this exercise. GA aircraft are said to have transported about one half million pounds of food into the Watsonville Airport to feed the cities of Watsonville and Santa Cruz in the emergency airlift following the Loma Prieta earthquake.



1:45PM: SCAPA Pilot Bette Gardner showed up with her load of food from Bellingham Washington, personally handing the first donation to Vicky Martin, director of distribution for the St Joseph's Family Center Food Pantry program. Vicky's operation distributes about 50,000 lbs of food per week to Gilroy area families in need. Bette is also a long-time member of the SCAPA Board of Directors.



1:52PM: Gilroy CERT leader Colin Tanner (head under sign) looks on as Mike Brogley and Pat Belanger sign in the Washington food donation in the receiving log before it is loaded onto the St Joseph's truck. Colin has been instrumental in encouraging the SCAPA DART to reach out to its surrounding community and build the partnerships that will make for an effective service in the event of an emergency which disrupts regional surface transportation.



2:03PM: We started wrapping up the day with a group meeting. Here Colette Armao a planner with the California Department of Transportation Aeronautical Division discusses work she is doing to get the Transportation Research Board to initiate a research project which will provide a handbook that will tell pilot groups from around the country how to start and organize their own Disaster Airlift Response Team. Peter Plinck, in the straw hat behind her to her right, is a Co-Chair of WEACT and observed the mobilization while assisting on the Ramp Crew.