



2005 I.S.A.R.

INTERNATIONAL MARINE SEARCH AND RESCUE COMPETITION
PACIFIC REGION TEAM

Pacific Region Team:
Sidney Clare
Shawn Burchett (team Canada)
Scott Baker (captain)
Kellei Bulmer (Can-Am)
Campbell Good

A synopsis of ISAR 2005 in Halifax Nova Scotia

ISAR Background

Each year the Coast Guard Auxiliaries in Canada and the USA meet at the International Search and Rescue Competition (ISAR) held alternately in Canada and the USA. ISAR 2005 was held in Halifax Nova Scotia on September 30th and October 1st. The Competition tests not only the seamanship and SAR skills of the auxiliary volunteers but also their teamwork, organization, and leadership skills. Each region in Canada and the USA selects their top members through regional competitions to send to ISAR.

The goal of ISAR is threefold: First, to demonstrate the skills of our volunteer lifesavers through a major search and rescue exercise; Second, it provides an avenue to increase esprit de corps and exchange information and ideas between the United States and the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliaries; Third, the competition provides a forum for the participants to be recognized for their work as dedicated volunteer lifesavers.

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Every region across Canada and the USA selects their team to send to ISAR, because there are only 5 regions in Canada and 6 in the USA 4 of the 5 regions in Canada also send an extra member to form a composite team called ‘Team Canada’ that evens the playing-field. Also, one randomly selected crew-member from each of the 12 teams is pulled-away to create 4 Can-Am teams composed of either two CCGA members and one USCGA or vice versa. The Can-Am teams compete in different events than the ISAR teams.

This year the team from the Pacific Region consisted of five members who were selected last May at the regional SARCOMP in Steveston. Unlike previous years the team members were selected from different units across the region which afforded them limited opportunity to practise as a team.

Pacific Team Captain Scott Baker (Unit 12 Halfmoon Bay) initially worked with all 5 team members: Shawn Burchett (team Canada designate from Unit 1 Howe Sound) Sidney Clare (Unit 14 Gibsons) Campbell Good (Unit 33 Oak Bay) and Kellei Bulmer (Unit 12 Halfmoon Bay) to develop training for the team before ISAR. The team arranged 2 weekend training sessions in an effort to prepare for the competition.

The ISAR Competition Events

The first evening of the competition consists of a briefing where each event in the competition is carefully explained and the final selection is made for the Can-Am teams. Team Canada members (including Shawn Burchett) also meet for the first time during the briefing. This year Kellei Bulmer was selected to join a Can-Am team leaving Scott Baker, Sidney Clare, and Campbell Good as the Pacific ISAR team. Shawn Burchette was also selected to be the Coxswain for team Canada.

ISAR Team Events

1. SAR Planning
2. On-Water SAREX
3. SAR Pump
4. Heaving Line
5. Damage Control
6. Marlinspike (Knots)

Can-Am Team Events

1. SAR-Pump
2. Marlinspike (Splicing)
3. Visual Communications
4. Heaving Line
5. Med-evac

SAR Planning (ISAR)

The first event of the competition for all ISAR teams was the SAR planning. A chartwork and search planning exercise that took place on the CCG base in Dartmouth. Teams were given one of 3 similar SAR scenarios and were required to plan a search, answering questions on a test paper and detailing the plan on the provided chart using correct notation. In addition, a chartwork quiz needed to be completed simultaneously. Teams were given 30 minutes to compete both portions of this event and knew that they would be performing their plan later in the day during the On-Water SAREX. No team managed to finish both exercises in the allotted time, many did not even make it half way through all the questions. This was probably the most challenging event requiring an excellent grasp of chartwork, chart symbols, and SAR planning methodology was essential.



On-Water SAREX (ISAR)



All ISAR teams, after completing the SAR Planning event were evaluated separately on their ability to perform on-the-water running the SAR plan they have developed earlier in the day. The CCG base provided FRCs and helmspeople (teams were not permitted to drive their own vessel) The event tested crew communications, procedures, search effectiveness, and safety. The event is probably the more realistic part of the competition in terms of what CCGA members are called upon to do day-to-day. It was graded on a score of 50 points with only 5 points assigned to actually locating the search object (a 1'square wooden float anchored and showing only about 1" above the surface)

SAR Pump (ISAR/Can-Am)

The ISAR and Can-Am SAR pump events were very similar. Pumps were stowed in the CCG standard pump kit a 24" tall 24" diameter drum with water-tight lid. Teams needed to unpack the pump, rig and start the pump and then complete a task before neatly stowing the pump back at the starting line. The team with the best time would win. The Can-Am teams needed to fill a 50gal drum, whereas the ISAR teams needed to push a small inflatable boat with the pump-stream but other than that the events were basically the same.



Heaving Line (ISAR/Can-Am)



Another similar event between the two competitions with the difference that the ISAR teams were throwing a lifering and the Can-Am teams a heaving line. Most ISAR teams had difficulty with this event that used a full size 762mm life ring and required team members to throw it to a floating target at 35' of the 12 teams 5 couldn't even get the ring to the target. The Can-Am competition consisted of throwing a heaving line to a target (also at 35') with as many throws as possible in a given time. One member was stationed in a row-boat and had to retrieve the line between each throw.

Marlinspike-splicing (Can-Am)

For the first time one of the ISAR events was held aboard a CCG ship while underway - the Can-Am teams met aboard the deck of the Edward Cornwallis to compete in a splicing challenge where each of the three members had to perform a splice in a poly-prop line (2 eye-splices and 1 short-splice) Teams were provided with two 9' lengths of line and needed to complete the splices such that the two eyes would fit down around pegs set in the deck separated by 16' The entire event was timed and points awarded for both speed and quality of the splices.



Marlinspike-knots (ISAR)



The ISAR teams marlinspike event consisted of a carefully scripted knots exercise in which the three members were positioned at 3 different stations. A set of tasks consisting of various knots needed to be followed in a precise order. Teams were timed and points were deducted for any mistakes including incorrect knots, missed steps, or for stepping out of the station boundary. Although named marlinspike, this event was more a test of communications and procedures than of knots.

Med-Evac (Can-Am)

Perhaps one of the most unusual events at the competition Can-Am members were required to reenact a ship-board rescue on the children's play ground (a wooden structure fashioned after a fishing boat with open sides) The team members were tethered together and had to follow a specific route, picking up items along the way as they proceeded below decks to recover an anne (simulated victim) They were then required to carry the anne back in a stretcher, call for a "med-evac" on the radio and lower anne into a waiting inflatable boat after receiving confirmation on the radio. Teams were timed and could be penalized for allowing the stretcher to touch the ground or incorrectly following the route.



Damage Control (ISAR)



This was probably the crowd-pleaser for spectators. The Canadian Navy had rigged up a damage control testing device: a steel box about 3' by 2' with two 3" pipes protruding from each side. The box had ten large jagged holes and was connected to a fire-hydrant. Teams were given a brief introduction by two members of the Navy damage control school and then, given wedges, clamps, and shoring material, had to patch as much as possible in 30 minutes. When a team was satisfied (they could choose to stop early) the judges placed 4 buckets around the box and measured the amount of water collected. Teams were graded on their time, with a penalty deducted for water collected and quality of the patches was also considered.

Visual Communications (Can-Am)

In honour of it being the year of the veteran in Canada this event was created to simulate outmoded communication methods used aboard ships in the past, and to test Can-Am teams ability to adapt to unusual challenges. The three team members were split up one on board each of three ships moored in the harbour (about 200' apart) Each member was given a sheet detailing three communication methods: semaphore, code flags, and morse code. Each member was required to send a message to one of their teammates using one of the three communication methods who, in turn, would send a corresponding message to the next team member using a different method etc... The object of the event was to transmit a 3-word message between the members. It sounds easy but very few of the teams were successful in this event in the allotted time.



Results

Scott Baker lead the Pacific ISAR team with Sidney Clare and Campbell Good to compete in the ISAR events alongside 11 other teams from across Canada and the USA. The Pacific team members won the on-Water SAREX with a near-perfect score - the one event they are called upon to perform more then any other as part of their volunteer service, a result which left the team members thrilled.

Shawn Burchett from Howe Sound was just as much a part of the Pacific team as any other member, despite being designated as a member of team Canada from the outset. Shawn did exceptionally well winning 2 events: SAR Communications and Marlinspike, with his crew: Rob LeBlanc (Quebec Region) and Herb Paetzold (Central & Artic) and lead team Canada to win the National trophy and the overall 2005 ISAR trophy for the first time in ISAR history.

Kellei Bulmer was randomly selected to become a member of one of the Can-Am teams. She was placed with the 2 oldest members in the Can-Am competition one from New Jersey and the other from Arizona - one being over 80 years old. Despite these challenges, Kellei led her team to win two events: Marlinspike and SAR Pump. Her team's performance in these events and the rest of the competition earned them the overall win for the Can-Am trophy as the best Can-Am team at ISAR 2005.

