

Suffolk Lowland Search and Rescue. Training Day at Stanford Training Area.

A sunny Sunday morning in May the satnav took me into the wilds of Norfolk, through Thetford and to a place called Stanta (Stanford Training Area). It's a beautiful part of the world, but we were not there to admire the countryside. It was SULARS training day. No longer than being met by SULARS Chairman, Andy King, there was a call over the radio. An incident had occurred and the team was scrambled quickly to assemble and get the exercise underway.



SULARS is Suffolk's Lowland Search and Rescue team. A voluntary organisation which is part of ALSAR, the association for Lowland Search and Rescue. Their main function is to search for vulnerable missing persons (known as mispers). As a charity they rely on donations and sponsorship and Complete Fixing Solutions are delighted to be involved.

As we drove towards the setup point, it was becoming very clear that these guys and girls don't muck about with their training. An impressive collection of vehicles, boat and bicycles all at the ready if needed. We met Wes the team manager for the day and were quickly briefed on what had happened – a five car pile-up and 3 missing persons somewhere on the site. With over 1000 acres, this was not going to be an easy exercise.

Andy and I first visited the crash site. What was immediately evident was the competence and knowledge of the team, not just from SULARS but also the Search and Rescue Doctors and the Suffolk Land Rovers Owners 4x4 team. Again the setup was impressive, very well organised with actual cars (borrowed from the Fire Service) and 15 real casualties (actors of course). The speed in which the casualties were dealt with was incredible. All team members calm and executed their part with the utmost skill and experience.



As the casualties were being tended to, first aid applied, the 4x4 team came in to action to transport everyone to safety and in a real situation what would be a hospital or nearest paramedic team. In the distance the NPAS (National Police Air Service) helicopter could be heard. The fact that the NPAS team are involved with this training exercise just goes to show the magnitude and importance of training the SULARS team to be at the top of their game.

As the NPAS team came in to land and with all casualties safely and diligently cared for, it was time to put the team in action to search for the mispers. This exercise stretches the whole team and uses all the available resources, skill and experience of each



member. With a combined effort between NPAS helicopter, the dogs, the 4x4 team and those SULSAR members on bikes or on foot. They set about the search. Within a few hours the mispers are found through a joint effort from all teams. But the situation is not made as simple as just finding those that are missing. The training continues as the mispers act out their briefs. Aggravated, annoyed, confused. The team has to use their resource to calm the situation and bring the mispers back to safety. An excellent test of control, persuasiveness and experience.



Complete Fixing Solutions were proud to be a part of the day. The whole experience was impressive. The SULSAR team are skilled, experienced and highly competent in what they do. We are excited to provide sponsorship to further strengthen the team's ability by providing the water rescue team with vital equipment they need to carry out their searches safely.

What a great cause – get involved by visiting <http://www.sulsar.org.uk/> or make a quick donation by texting SSAR01 £5 to 70070 (Donations can be from anything between £1 - £10)

