**Field Experience Narrative Report**

**Dates: Sept. 24, 2023**

**Host Sites: Eastern Iowa Airport Triennial Full-Scale Exercise sponsored by Linn County EMA and Public Health Department**

**Location Description: Eastern Iowa Airport, Cedar Rapids, IA**

**Need from Host site: Victims for a simulated plane crash with 120 souls**

**Learning Objectives & Gaps Filled**:

Through this field experience, students will be able to:

* Understand the process of a full scale exercise
* Experience direct participation in a full scale exercise
* Appreciate the emotional impact of a large scale emergency event on victims

The gaps filled by this experience:

* Knowledge of the extent and complexity of a full scale exercise
* Understanding the purpose of a full scale exercise
* Direct observation and experience of the multiple actions and resources needed to responded to a large emergency event

**Students Participating:** (# of undergraduate & # of graduate students and field of study)

10 students and Faculty Sponsor

**Description of project(s):**

The Eastern Iowa Airport in Cedar Rapids is required by FAA to complete a full-scale exercise based on a plane crash every three years. 15 surrounding law enforcement and emergency response agencies participated in the exercise. In addition, 120 volunteers acted as victims with a variety of injuries. Strike Force worked with Heather Tripp of Linn County Emergency Management Agency to provide volunteer victims. The exercise was a Strike Force Mission Critical event. Team members arrived at a designated site at the airport at 7:15 am to get their injury designations and appropriate moulage (make-up). The exercise started at 8:00 am with a safety overview for participants. Victims were then bussed to the airport runway designated for the exercise and directed to “take their places” around the area. The exercise began with a custom-fitted airplane fuselage fitted with burners. Fire response arrived to distinguish the fire. EMTs and other emergency response professionals then began to walk the field to identify and triage victims. The exercise ended at 1:30 pm with a hot wash presented by the primary participating agencies. Students were asked to complete the Strike Force post event survey and email their thoughts about what went well, areas of improvement and their personal experience.

**Description of Field Experience:** (student perception & field staff perception)

See evaluations

**Summary of Evaluations:** (host site & students)

I figured I would take some time to reflect on yesterday’s event and send you some of my thoughts! I thought the experience was great and something I will never forget! I think for the most part the drill went smoothly and the debrief reflected that. It felt like the mistakes were known among those who made them, and they knew what they would do differently next time. I also felt that the responders/emergency management professionals took the drill very seriously with an intent to do their duties efficiently and effectively! I saw one slight miscommunication myself as there was some confusion with the triage tags and which parts to rip off/ to keep on the victims. It is very important to ensure EVERY emergency responder can read the tag on each victim and that it includes all necessary information still on it as the victim goes through different triage levels. That is pretty much it!! I had a great experience, and I thank YOU so much Bonnie for being the best!

I think something that went well was the responder's communication skills with the victims. Some of the victims were very emotional and hysterical and I think the responders did a great job of calming them down and providing relief. Something that I think didn't go well was the responder's communication with each other. It seemed like the victims were directed to go to areas that couldn't help them. For example, I was instructed to go to different tarps and when I got there, I was questioned about who had sent me there and why they sent me there, so I just think their lack of communication with each other confused the victims on where they were supposed to go.

My after thought after the exercise: I was very curious to think about how I would've acted in a real-life situation. I think because I knew it was a drill, I was very calm, so I was just wondering how different it would've been if it had actually happened.

 Things I noticed during the drill:

1. I thought it was quite hard to act injured. I guess I am not an actor. I did start to feel the weight of the entire event once I was "transported' to the triage area. I saw and heard all of the EMS staff running around and trying to coordinate who went where. I then knew the sheer importance of going along with the drill and acting the part as best I could.
2. Things I noticed that maybe could be changed: my yellow ribbon that was placed on me fell off the second it was placed on my wrist. EMS should make sure they are tied on properly. The lady with the clipboard at triage seemed very overwhelmed with everybody shouting at her about the injuries of the people. Maybe they should have two people working together to coordinate the transportation of the injured.
3. The good things I noticed: the morale was great, and the EMS staff seemed to treat the event like it was real. I also enjoyed listening to the physicians from the university discussing the injuries and deciding who should go to each hospital based on the capabilities of each location.
	1. thoughts about what went well with the exercise and areas for improvement (ex. Victim status tie-ons were blowing off, victim names removed from triage tags, etc).

a.I really enjoyed the exercise, I thought it showed a great example of collaboration between different departments and it seemed like overall, they had a strategy. Some areas of improvement are mostly in the direct care for the 'victims'; although their strategy was great for the most part, there were times I felt there were a lot of miscommunications where one person would give me one set of directions and someone else would tell me different. Other than that, it was a pretty amazing and realistic experience.

2. In addition, as we spoke at the exercise, please provide your thoughts about how the exercise affected you personally; emotions during the exercise, Ah-Hah moments, and the like.

a.There was a very realistic aspect to the exercise that almost emphasized the fear my character as a 'victim' was supposed to feel, it made for a very surreal experience. If I was ever in that situation, I would definitely feel scared but also very aware of myself and my mind (there was a lot of talking to myself while i waited).

Agendas, Photos or Other Related Materials – photos on P drive and on Strike Force SharePoint