# Operation Victor Echo – 2017

**Radio operators in the St. Vincent and the Grenadines and contiguous states were involved with an emergency communications simulation staged on Saturday, June 03. The scenario involved an evacuation due to an imminent eruption, hence 'Operation Victor Echo', V. E. standing for Volcanic Emergency.**

**The scenario operated 'on the premise that the national emergency management structure collapsed at the beginning of a national emergency. There was also a loss of domestic telecommunications forcing the use of emergency communications provided by radio amateurs'.**

**The field exercise was conducted from amateur stations located at Paget Farm, Fancy, Layou, Georgetown and Calliaqua. Assistance came from radio amateurs in Tobago, Grenada, Trinidad and St. Lucia.**

**The scenario unfolded 'involved the evacuation of entire communities from the base of our active volcano on both Windward and Leeward sides of the island, with radio amateurs coordinating the placement of evacuees to shelters in the Southern third of the island (Green zone) including the Grenadines.**

**Murphy was at work during this scenario and as the first wave of evacuees was leaving Fancy, a massive rock slide blocked access into and out of the village. This new situation compounded by an imminent eruption required villagers to be evacuated by air. This is where our regional neighbours came into the picture.**

**In the absence of local internet service a Ham in Tobago was able to confirm from UWI seismic that there was significant activity on their recordings warranting immediate evacuation. They, along with St. Lucia radio operators were able to coordinate a helicopter response from Hewanorra airport as well as opening shelters in the South of St. Lucia for the incoming evacuees, as air borne ash in the AIA take off corridor posed a hazard for departing aircraft, ETJ was to be activated for emergency traffic only.'**

**The field exercise began at 5:00 AM, ran for four hours before adverse propagation forced the pre-mature closure of the event on the HF bands but by that time the majority of the field exercise had already been accomplished. The radio operator stationed in Fancy was able to communicate with radio operators in St. Lucia via their VHF repeater and therefore the field exercise could be completed.**

**Lessons learned, a redundant communications system (powered by renewable energy) including inter island repeater linking is absolutely necessary to ensure reliability of service when it is really needed. Having trained radio operators with functioning equipment in EVERY community is a goal that we need to strive for and achieve.**

**Director of the RRL Inc. wishes to thank all radio operators who participated during this exercise, notably J88NAC Steve, J88DX Cally, J88NGU St. Clair, J88FP Andre, J88NLL Lawson, J88NLR Leroy, J88NFE Clayton and other volunteers. Support came from St. Lucia J89CU Lin, Grenada J39JX Floyd, Tobago 9Z4W Anthony and 9Z4DT John from Trinidad. Special thanks to J88NEK Elna who hosted the Director of the RRL J88CD - Donald for this training activity. Thanks is also expressed to the NTRC for printing simulation announcements.**

**Besides being a scenario about an 'imminent eruption', the activity also sharpened radio operator's skills for the 2017 hurricane which began on June 1st.**

**Report submitted by: Donald De Riggs – Director/RRL Inc.**