

***Exercise Yellow Apron 24-01
Earthquake Response***

**Rocky Mountain Region
Unified Command
After Action Review
Mission 24-T-3538
Part I**

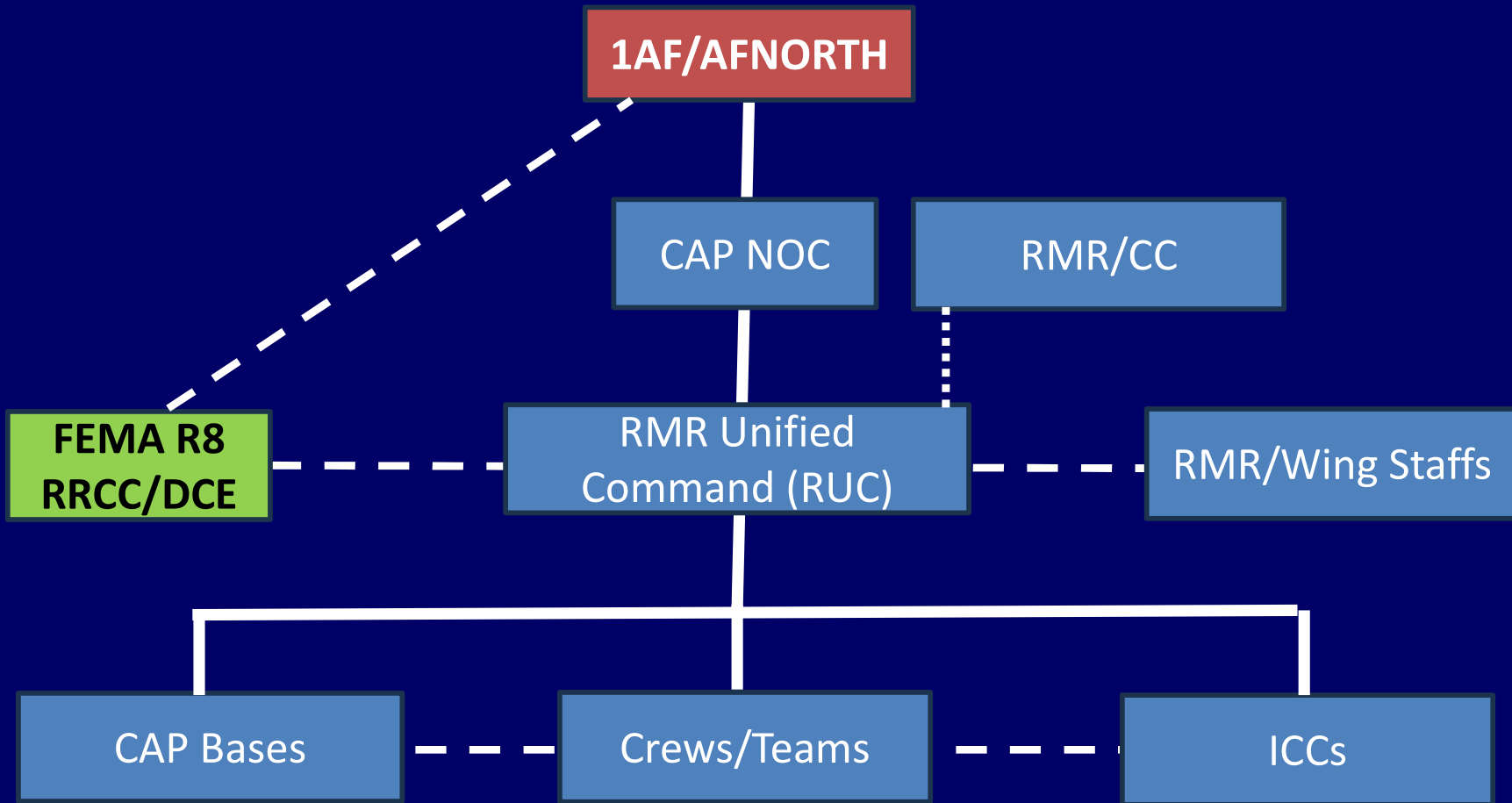
1 October 2023 – 7 April 2024

Yellow Apron Exercise Program

Purpose: Establish a responsive region-wide C2 capability for integrating and synchronizing DR resources with FEMA and States. Focus will always be C2 operationalized through the deployment, employment, and sustainment of RMR resources - to include *capabilities* to set up and sustain:

1. A “distributive” RMR Unified Command/Incident Mgt Team
2. Incident Communication Centers (ICC) and Mobile Comm Teams
3. Staging Bases
4. Other response resources (Acft/Crews, SUAS, CSTs, PIO etc).

Yellow Apron Exercise Program



Authorities

- Command
- - - Coordinating
- Administrative

Yellow Apron Exercise Program

FY2023

FY2024

CPX 18-21 Sept

CAP Agency Rep Engagement

- FEMA R8 RRCC

CPX 27 Feb-1 Mar

FTX 5-7 April

RMR Command & Control
and Communications

- FEMA R8 RRCC
- RMR UC
- Live-Fly
- ICCs

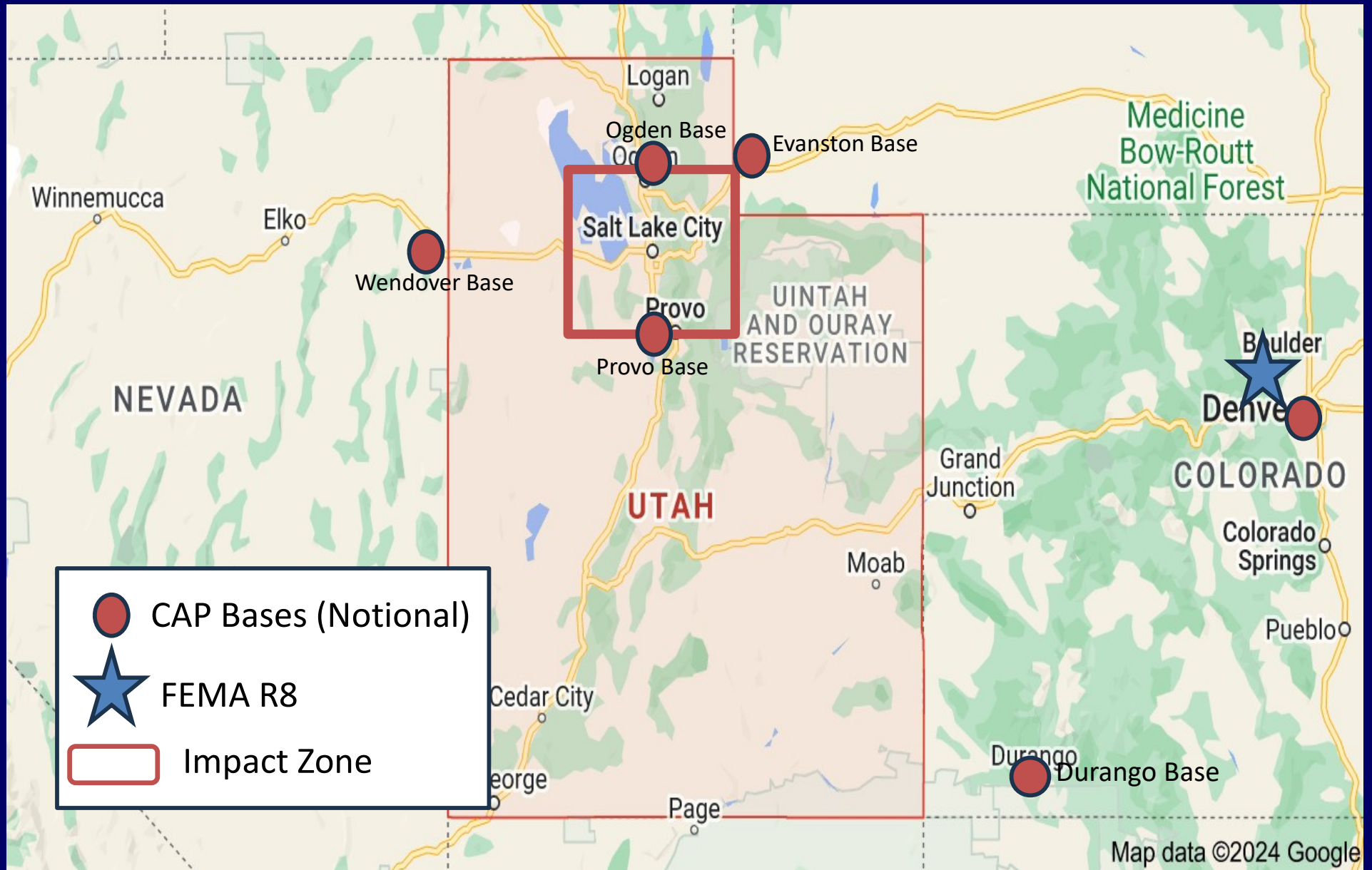
Durango Base

CPX TBD Aug ???

FTX 29 Aug-1 Sept

Scenario

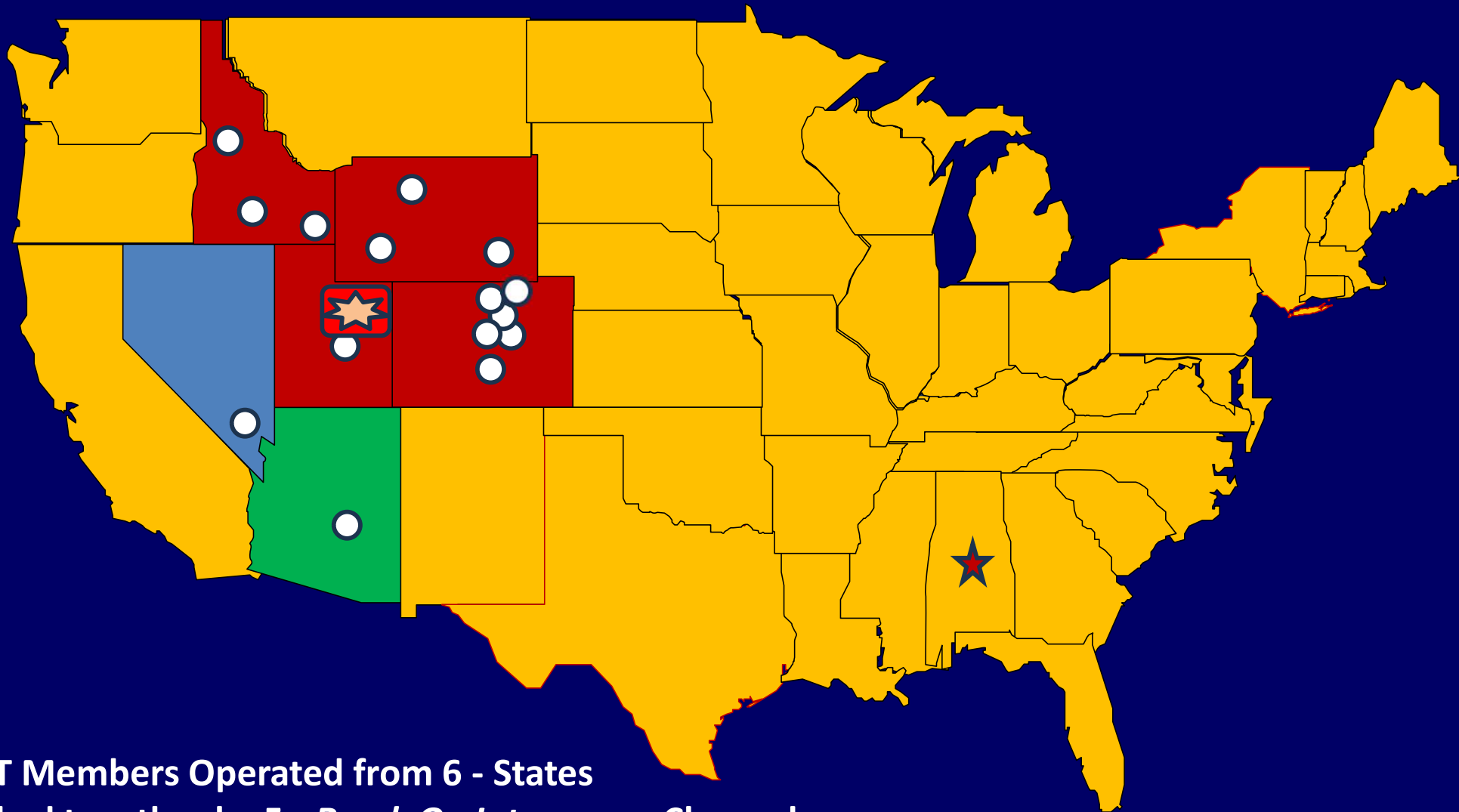
7.0 Earthquake Along Wasatch Range



Going In Challenges

- First time RMR has done a multi-region, multi-day, and joint interagency - FEMA exercise.
- First time RMR Unified Command established with 17 members in 6 states (Most have never met each other).
- First time use of *ReadyOp* for multi-state Disaster Relief exercise.
- FEMA delays in STARTEX. Original date was 11-16 Dec 2023
- Constraints placed on available RMR resources due to scenario.
- Significant distances from home bases to impact zone.
- Weather – Weather - Weather

IMT Member Locations – “One CAP”



**IMT Members Operated from 6 - States
Linked together by 5 - *ReadyOp Intercomm* Channels
Over an area of 20% of the nation.**

CAP Objectives

- ✓ Setup and staff a C2 organization capable of sustaining a multi-wing/region response – Unified Command (UC).
- ✓ Assign and train personnel to work in a FEMA Regional Response Coordination Center (RRCC) – FEMA R8 RRCC.
- ✓ Select and train qualified overhead staff members into a regional Incident Management Team (IMT) for the RMR UC.
- ✓ Leverage current off-the-shelf technologies to support distributive C2 operations. – *ReadyOp* and *TEAMS*.
- ✓ Plan and conduct sorties within the C2 framework.
- ✓ Integrate other areas for future exercising (MC, PIO, HSO, sUAS).

CAP Response

- Mission Dates:
 - Phase I (Planning/Training) 10/01/2023
 - Phase II (CPX) - Staffing of FEMA R8 RRCC and UC/IMT
 - Phase III (FTX) – Staffing IMT and “Live Fly Sorties”
- Aircraft: 3 of 6 flew sorties
- Vehicles: 2
- Sorties: 5 Air and 2 Ground
- Personnel: 43
- Units/RMR HQs, COWG, IDWG, NVWG, UTWG, and WYWG
- Cost: \$997 of \$3,700 budgeted.

RMR Unified Command – Incident Management Team

- Unified Commanders – Col Mike Vorachek (IDWG), Lt Col Mike Carlson (WYWG), Major Rob Yusko (COWG), and 1Lt Bill Schellhous (UTWG)
- Operations Section Chief – Capt Sanjay Tyagi (COWG)
- Planning Section Chief – Lt Col Mike McDonald (COWG)
- Finance & Admin Chief – 1Lt Mike Stone (COWG)
- Communications Unit Leader - Maj Mark Sheets (COWG)
- Safety Officer - Maj Jim Ormsby (WYWG)
- Mission Chaplains – Col Jeff Johnson (RMR) & Col John Moser (IDWG)
- PIOs - Capt Stephanie Payton (IDWG) Capt LuWana DePorter (WYWG)
- PCR Liaison – Maj Bruce Hazeltine (NVWG)
- Weather Support Officer – Major Gerry Creager (SWR)
- FEMA RRCC Agency Reps - Lt Col Bob Ditch & Lt Col Hank Eng (RMR)

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RMR Command/IMT AAR

Section/Unit Name: Command
Leader/Chief: Major Rob Yusko

Sustain

- Use of ReadyOp for voice comms during exercise activities.
- TEAMS use for document collaboration pre-exercise meetings
- Use of standardized ICS forms and process.

Improve

- Training/proficiency in TEAMS before next exercise starts, for time efficiency during exercise
- Increase unified Comms via ReadyOp
- Embrace Area/Unified Command roles during region exercise

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RMR Command/IMT AAR

Section/Unit Name: Command

Leader/Chief: Col Mike Vorachek

Sustain

- Line of communication with FEMA Region VIII.
- FEMA R VIII exercise participation.
- Visibility of CAP within FEMA

Improve

- Communications via CAP HF and/or FEMA SHARES frequencies.
(IDWG has FEMA SHARES frequencies in our HF radios.)
- Use of FEMA image uploader.
- Responsibilities for wing level positions under UC structure

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RMR Command/IMT AAR

Section/Unit Name: Command

Leader/Chief: Lt Col Mike Carlson

Sustain

- Continue to use one Virtual Meeting Platform as Std across Nat'l/Region/Wing CAP (i.e. TEAMS, ZOOM, GoogleMeet, etc)
- Assure CAP Repeater access through ReadyOp (WY has yet to have any connection to any of its repeaters)

Improve

- Text option through ReadyOp (similar to how TEAMS has a "Chat" function and can send to the group or one person)
- Make ReadyOp perform like any other Virtual Meeting Platform (i.e. TEAMS, ZOOM, GoogleMeet, etc)
- Incorporate into ReadyOp or WMIRS a "Flight Following" function (i.e. Flightradar24, FlightAware, etc.)

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RMR Command/IMT AAR

Section/Unit Name: Command
Leader/Chief: 1Lt Bill Schellhous

Sustain

- Good Real-time communication.
- Good planning meetings.
- Safety focus.

Improve

- UC Strategy Meeting(s).
- Coordination of operational tactics.
- UC making last minute changes to the Communications Plan, without coordination/permission from COML.

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RMR Command/IMT AAR

Section/Unit Name: Operations

Leader/Chief: Capt Sanjay Tyagi

Sustain

- NVWG participation (for FEMA events in UT)
- TEAMS use for collaboration

Improve

- IMT training/proficiency in TEAMS before next exercise starts.
- Integrate CAP exercise deliverables with FEMA
- Expand/rotate CAP IMT members at FEMA

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RMR Command/IMT AAR

Section/Unit Name: Planning Section

Leader/Chief: Lt Col Mike McDonald

Sustain

- Ready Ops was useful, used appropriately with no unnecessary chatter.
- The exercise gave a lot of staff the exposure to a large scale mission.
- Original planned scale of the exercise with wings getting two flights would have been manageable; the reduction in flights due to the weather made it hectic than it would have been, allowing more training than "working" time.

Improve

- WMIRS is not document management friendly. It doesn't take all document formats and folders can't be nested.
- Mission objectives were not developed by the UC.
- When a presenter has to use Ready Ops and PowerPoint at the same computer, whichever app the user needs "takes the screen."

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RMR Command/IMT AAR

Section/Unit Name: Pacific Region Liaison
Leader/Chief: Major Bruce Hazeltine

Sustain

- Communications and participation across Wings/Regions
- Opportunities to practice *ReadyOp*
- Photo Processing workflow

Improve

- Practice and training on Command meeting tools
- Utilization of MSAs for technology
- Planning to Operations workflow

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RMR Command/IMT AAR

Section/Unit Name: Communications

Leader/Chief: Major Mark Sheets

Sustain

- Supplementing ReadyOp with Wing ICC's – Following RO Plan
- Wing ICC's communicated with their respective aircraft
- *ReadyOp* allows for coverage by other ICC's when needed

Improve

- *ReadyOp* failures need correction
- Identify ICC's earlier and planning on staffing
- More repeaters with *ReadyOp* needed. (SE UT, SW CO, WY)

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RMR Command/IMT AAR

Section/Unit Name: Safety

Leader/Chief: Major Jim Ormsby

Sustain

- Electronic communications (TEAMS, *ReadyOp*) worked well.
- Very good communication between the levels of UC.
- Apparent good cooperation between Wings.

Improve

- Plan for a backup comm system, and have it specified, i.e. what is the procedure if power goes out or is unavailable.
- There were no backup safety personnel.

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RMR Command/IMT AAR

Section/Unit Name: Public Information

Leader/Chief: Capt Stephanie Payton

Sustain

- Comm from the UCs was very good; with lots of emails, texts, phone calls, weekly meetings, and questions answered.
- Including PIO at beginning during first meetings.
- UC allowed review of taskings/action items in the Teams folder.

Improve

- Provide access to Teams/other tools before exercise.

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RMR Command/IMT AAR

Section/Unit Name: Chaplain Support Team
Leader/Chief: Ch Colonel Jeff Johnson

Sustain

- Mission Chaplain (MC) participation within their roles
- Chaplain notification of missions/exercises
- MC access to TEAMS and *ReadyOp*

Improve

- Appoint mission chaplain POC with access to resources
- Recruit more disaster rated CST's in the region
- Improve MC/HSO communication

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RMR Command/IMT AAR

Section/Unit Name: Finance/Admin

Leader/Chief: Capt Mike Stone

Sustain

- Unified command was effective
- Scenario was realistic.
- Use of *ReadyOp* by IMT to exercise radio communications.

Improve

- Along with the actual budget we may consider a notional budget to work with, to cover the notional sorties.
- Planning meetings should be on TEAMS. *ReadyOp* was problematic as primary planning meeting channel. There were system issues, and you can't tell when people are talking over each other. Others may feel differently.

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RMR Command/IMT AAR

Section/Unit Name: Weather Support Officer

Leader/Chief: Capt Gerry Creager, CAP

Sustain

- RMR personnel were able to perform their assigned tasks well.
- Use of TEAMS and *ReadyOp* in isolation, not as a duplex system, was a good training aid.
- Ability to obtain ReadyOp licenses quickly was key.

Improve

- Attempts to use *ReadyOp* for audio and Teams for presentations in meetings made no sense. Teams for meetings (with appropriate training and that personnel must have privileges)
- Need more training in how to utilize a specific weather support element for planning and execution
- WSO was over-committed prior to exercise and didn't get notice early; need to expand trained weather support, but systematically, not ad hoc by Region fiat.

“Yellow Apron”

RMR Command/IMT AAR

Section/Unit Name: FEMA R8 & Exercise Director
Leader/Chief: Lt Col “Dr. Bob” Ditch

Sustain

- RMR Unified Command Response Structure
- Use of ReadyOp for both internal and external comm
- Use of Teams for collaborative meetings

Improve

- Get more people trained in ReadyOp and TEAMS
- Get Repeaters Operational throughout RMR
- Need Logistics Component in Planning and Execution
- Get Unified Command Team more experienced in “Planning P” processes, meetings and deliverables.

“Yellow Apron”

RMR Command/IMT AAR

Overall Assessment

Sustain

- Use RMR Unified Command (UC) response structure
- Use ReadyOp for internal IMT/UC and external comm with teams/crews
- Use TEAMS for collaborative meetings
- Use FEMA Exercise backbone and scenario for realism and training.
- Continue to staff FEMA R8 RRCC and possibly IMAT
- Integrate MC and PIO early
- Identify early ICCs

Improve

- Train more staff/members in ReadyOp and TEAMS
- Make repeaters operational throughout RMR with ReadyOp
- Expand planning early for CST, PIO, ICCs/Staging Bases, and Logistics.
- Increase RMR capabilities in AP, sUAS, Mobile Comm, and CSTs
- Train UC Team in **“Planning P”** processes, meetings, and deliverables.

Yellow Apron Exercise Program

FY2023

FY2024

CPX 18-21 Sept

CPX 27 Feb-1 Mar

FTX 5-7 April

Next

CPX TBD Aug ???

FTX 29 Aug-1 Sept

RMR Command & Control and
Comm Refinement and Expansion.

FEMA R8 RRCC

RMR UC

3-day Live-Fly (AP)

ICCs & Mobile Comm

Impact Zone

Exercise Yellow Apron 24-01
Earthquake Response

Rocky Mountain Region
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1 October 2023 – 7 April 2024