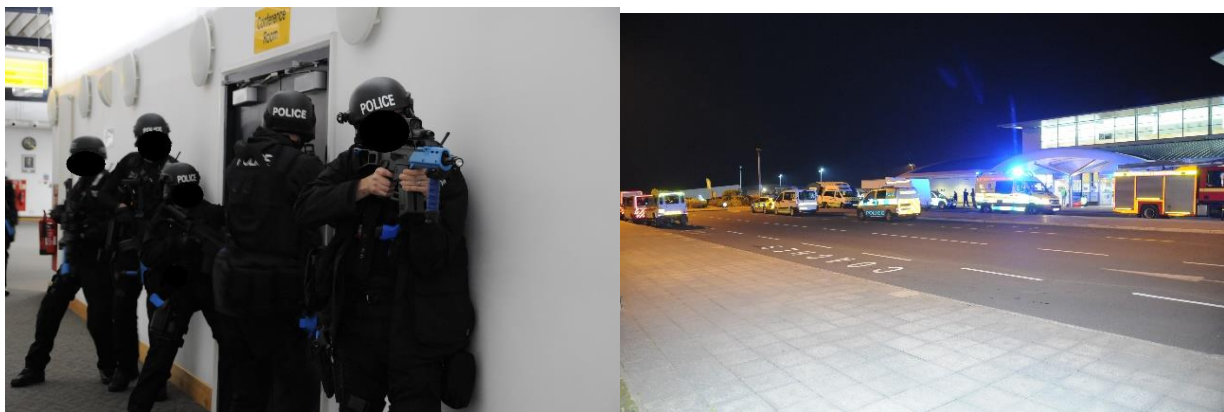


A marauding terrorist attack was ended after armed police responded to a 999 call of a man stabbing people in the airport terminal.

This frightening scenario was all part of a tri-service exercise simulating a type of attack which has become all-too common: a car deliberately colliding with members of the public outside of airport departures before the driver proceeded inside to begin a knife attack.

In the planning for nearly a year, the exercise was designed to test the response of Guernsey Police, Guernsey Fire & Rescue Service and St John's Ambulance to such an incident.

Armed police were swiftly deployed following staged 999 calls, with orders to locate and confront the threat. When officers arrived the terrorist had proceeded to the first floor, leaving multiple casualties – many seriously injured – in their wake, needing urgent medical attention. Officers began a sweep of the building to find and confront the threat, in order to make it safe for first responders to enter and begin treating the wounded.



Dynamic decision making, activating response plans and procedures and ensuring a multi-agency response were key parts of the exercise.

Tactical Firearms Commander, Chief Inspector Operations J-P Le Breton said:

“This methodology of attack has, sadly, become increasing common so it’s vital that Guernsey does not become complacent and ensures its response plans are current and well-rehearsed. While we are lucky to live in a safe and secure environment this type of attack could occur anywhere and anytime without any prior warning. Such a situation would be a dynamic, fluid event and although an exercise cannot fully replicate what a real-life scenario would be like, we tried to keep this as real and proportionate as possible.

“Our on-island capability to deal with such a situation is made up of highly trained staff from all three emergency services who are committed to responding to serious incidents. Placing them in as realistic a scenario as possible will assist in preparing them for what they may be expected to respond to. This was an excellent opportunity for the three emergency services to work together under the Joint Emergency Service Interoperability Principles (JESIP) and tested Joint Emergency Services Control Centre, Commanders and first responders as well as our airport partners and their stakeholders.”

A total of eight St John Emergency Ambulance Staff and 14 volunteer reserves were on scene, with two officers directing the response off-site.

Chief Ambulance Officer, Mark Mapp said:

“It is important for staff from the St John Emergency Ambulance Service to train alongside volunteers from the Ambulance Reserve and our colleagues from the other blue light services.

“During the exercise, the ambulance crews were faced with multiple casualties with serious wounds which were designed to test how we would cope in a major incident.

“Exercises like this are valuable in establishing how well the principles of joint-working actually play out in reality and what lessons can be learnt for the future. The value of training scenarios like this is not just to practice the things we are good at, but also collectively across the blue light services consider what we could improve and do differently next time.”



Chief Fire Officer Jon Le Page said:

“Obviously this is a scenario we hope never to face. But, training for it means that, should the worst happen, we are drilled and prepared in how to best respond alongside the other emergency services, and we know exactly what our role is in order to carry out the rescue operations needed to save as many lives as possible.

“We will now review our actions and performance to update our plans as necessary.”

Head of Aviation Services for Guernsey Airport Ash Nicholas said:

“This exercise allowed all agencies and emergency services taking part to put their response plans into action in as realistic environment as possible. By using the Guernsey Airport terminal building out of normal opening hours, it allowed airport staff to test our contingency plans and learn any lessons as a result. With heightened security threat levels across the British Isles and in Europe, Guernsey has to treat these seriously. This recent exercise has given all parties involved valuable insight and preparedness for a real emergency or national security issue. We also thank the voluntary agencies and services for giving up their time for the exercise, as it gives them the opportunity to test their own procedures and responses.”

A thorough review of the exercise will now take place, and any lessons learnt incorporated into the plan.

