



Air Force MARS Today





Daily Area, Region, State Operations Nets and Exercises

Purpose: Establish core capability to move emergency traffic supporting DOD and DHS agencies.

Who is Eligible: All AF MARS trainee and auxiliary members.

What the Daily Training Nets Do: Conduct Directed Nets in accordance with the Joint MARS Voice Net SOP, provide on-the-air experience to trainees, and disseminate information on current MARS operations and future exercises or anticipated actual events.

When are the Nets Scheduled: Nets are scheduled by the Area, Region, and State MARS Directors and Net Managers.

Where: Nets are established by Area, Region, and/or State based on factors specific to each operational echelon.





EEI Reporting to Military and Federal Response Planners

Purpose: To provide disaster response planners with ground truth. Tri-Service MARS has been described as an organization of 5,000 Forward Observers.

Who is Eligible: All MARS members who have completed ECOM/EEI Training. MARS operators who file EEI's in a disaster are the "eyes and ears" for the National Guard Bureau and FEMA.

What Purpose Does an EEI Report Serve: EEI's produce: 1. the first indication that an incident has occurred, 2. indication that the incident has changed in terms of size and /or intensity, 3. as corroboration of other field reports.

When: Transmitted as soon as an incident is observed or reported by a reliable source.

Where: ACTUAL INCIDENT EEI's are addressed to: AAN3EEI@WINLINK.ORG and the Subject Line **MUST** read: //MARS O/INCIDENT NOTIFICATION

Practice EEI's are addressed to: AFN2EC@WINLINK.ORG

EEI Reports may originate in the form of voice message or digital WinLink traffic

Point of Contact: Mike Carl/AFN2EC
National Emergency Communications Coordinator
E-mail: mike998800@adelphia.net





Base Support Teams (BST)

Purpose: To provide technical support, access to MARS Nets, and cooperation among AF MARS and the Active Duty, Air Guard, and Reserves.

Who is Eligible: Base Support Teams are formed with the approval of the State MARS Director (SMD) and are under the direction of the Installation MARS Directors (IMD) who are typically the host military unit's Communications Squadron Commanders.

What BST's Do: Match AF MARS assets or capabilities with an identified Active Duty, ANG or Reserves unit's need. Assist with deployment and testing of field equipment and conducting on-the-air unit training and testing.

When: BST's assist at Air National Guard and Reserves monthly Unit Training Assemblies, ANG and Reserves unit Annual Training, as well as at annual joint military and civilian Full Scale Exercises.

Where: It is an AF MARS goal to build quality BST and technical support programs in each state.





Phone Patch Net

Purpose: To provide back-up phone patch service to DOD and DHS aircraft and ground units for official mission-related and crew morale traffic.

Who is Eligible: Experienced AF MARS members who meet the criteria established by the Phone Patch Net Manager, are recommended by their SMD, and who complete specialized training and evaluation.

What the Phone Patch Net Does: The Phone Patch Net links military and civilian government aircraft and ground teams to their bases via HF radio and DSN or commercial telephone circuits.

The AF MARS Phone Patch Net currently completes an average of 200+ patches/month for in-flight emergencies, search and rescue sorties, in-flight refueling coordination, and routine flight operations.

When: The AF MARS Phone Patch Net operates 365 days/year from opening to the close of HF propagation.

Where: Stations are located from Maine to California and respond to global requests for phone patches.

Point of Contact: John McGee/AFN4PP
National Phone Patch Net Manager
E-mail: afn2ac@juno.com





Transcontinental (TRANSCON) Net

Purpose: To provide a network structure to facilitate message traffic among MARS Regions and/or Areas.

Who is Eligible: All MARS Auxiliary Members.

What the TRANSCON Net Does: The TRANSCON Net is the extension of the MARS State, Region, and Area Nets in the national MARS traffic net system.

When the TRANSCON Net is Active: Typically Monday through Friday on the 13 MHz primary and 7 MHz alternate frequencies.

Where TRANSCON Net Stations are Located: TRANSCON Net stations are located in every state.





Shared Resources (SHARES) Program Participation

Purpose: To exchange critical information among Federal entities in support of National Security Emergency Preparedness (NSEP) objectives.

Who is Eligible: AF MARS is allowed 5 stations from each state.

What the SHARES Net Does: SHARES HF radio stations interoperate to transmit NSEP messages when normal means of communications are not available.

When the SHARES Net is Active: SHARES Nets are activated by the National Communications System in anticipation of a major incident or in response to an unexpected emergency.

The SHARES Program Office also schedules nationwide communications exercises typically biannually. SHARES Net Control stations conduct regional coordination nets weekly.

Where SHARES Net Stations are Located: SHARES stations are located in every state.

Point of Contact: Mike Carl/AFN2EC
National Emergency Communications Coordinator
E-mail: mike998800@adelphia.net





National Emergency Coordination Network (NECN)

Purpose: To provide a backup Command and Control network to support the National Response Framework (NRF) activities.

Who is Eligible: AF MARS Coordinators will develop a selection process for a primary and alternate NECN Liaison Station from each Area.

What the NECN Net Does: Establishes a backup network for the FEMA National Operations Center and handles emergency traffic.

When the NECN Net is Active: Activated by the FEMA in anticipation of a major incident or in response to an unexpected emergency.

FEMA also schedules quarterly nationwide NECN communications exercises.

Where NECN Net Stations are Located: NECN stations are located in every state and protectorate.

Point of Contact: Mike Carl/AFN2EC
National Emergency Communications Coordinator
E-mail: mike998800@adelphia.net





Future Plans

1. Emphasize internal training of AF MARS operators utilizing daily nets, Tri-Service MARS exercises, and multi-agency exercises..
2. Continue the building of relationships with Air National Guard and Reserves units to provide technical support, facilitate Annual Training, augment communications teams, and provide other support as requested.
3. Emphasize to the membership the importance of their EEI Reports to DOD, FEMA, and other federal response planners.
4. Promote Phone Patch operations to DOD/DHS as well as to interested AF MARS members.
5. Expand SHARES Program participation in each state.
6. Expand participation in the National Emergency Coordination Net by creating Area positions.
7. Further develop the AF MARS digital communications systems that are independent of the Internet and are therefore less vulnerable to cyber attack.



MARS Operations in Haiti

- In response to the 12 Jan 2010 earthquake, volunteer amateur radio and MARS operators deployed to Haiti to provide communications support to the military, and to medical and humanitarian organizations
 - This was not an official MARS activation or deployment – the MARS operators who traveled to Haiti did so at their own expense and under the auspices of the non-governmental organizations they supported
- Air Force MARS operator Jack Satterfield (AFA4DG) of St. Pete Beach, FL was among the first on the scene
 - He provided critical life-saving communications, contacting the USNS Comfort off the Haitian coast, arranging for transport of patients to and from medical facilities, and assisting doctors from the University of Miami Medical Center's Project Medishare





MARS Operations in Haiti



- MARS operators helped to provide coordinating communications among military units, between military units and NGO's, and coordinated military helicopter MEDEVAC and sealift to the USNS Comfort.
- Multiple phone patches were conducted on the Air Force MARS Phone Patch Net
- A communications link was established with the U.S. Joint Operations Command
- HF WinLink was used to relay message traffic
- Army, Navy-Marine Corps, and Air Force MARS operators participated in this effort, making it a truly **joint** MARS operation
- *This was the first significant use of joint MARS assets in response to a major disaster in which almost 300,000 people were killed and a country's infrastructure collapsed*
 - The lessons learned will be valuable as MARS develops its support for domestic emergency preparedness operations