

THE MILITARY AFFILIATE RADIO SYSTEM (MARS)
(UNCLASSIFIED)

The Military Affiliate Radio System (MARS) exists to coordinate the activities of civilian and military amateur radio operators and to stimulate interest in the field of military radio communication.

In times of war the radio amateur has been the hard core of communications personnel for military radio operations. The skills he perfects in the pursuit of his hobby, plus his scientific curiosity and enthusiasm, frequently make him the logical choice of the Armed Forces for training in research and development and for the many other skills in the fields of electronics and radio communication.

In the years prior to World War II, the Army created the Army Amateur Radio System to provide a link between the Army and a large pool of trained radio operators. During the war, most of these civilian operators became military operators and were assigned high priority communication jobs and AARS ceased to exist. In 1949, the Army and Air Force coordinated in creating MARS.

Such an affiliation is a vital part of our peacetime mission. The regular Army is kept as small as possible, consistent with its mission. When, because of national emergency or threat of war, it becomes necessary to expand the standing force professional soldiers and existing military facilities are inadequate.

To convert a man with no knowledge of radio into a competent radio operator involves one of the longest training periods in the Army. Classes must be kept small especially for accelerated courses.

Statistics compiled in the Office of the Chief Signal Officer show that in time of war more than 15 percent of all military personnel are engaged in one way or another in the operation and maintenance of signal communications and electronics equipment.

The MARS goal is to train amateur radio operators, using their privately owned equipment, so that they will be able to make an instantaneous change-over from peacetime to war-time operation if they are needed. This includes both fixed and tactical type operation.

MARS objectives are: To create interest and further training in military radio communication; to coordinate practices and procedures of amateur radio operations with those of military radio communications, and to provide an additional source of trained radio communications personnel in the event of a local or national emergency.

Member stations are classified under two categories: Military and Civilian. There are military stations which provide two-way radio communication linking the Department of the Army Headquarters with the six Continental U. S. Army Headquarters, and they in turn, with the Military District Headquarters of each state; and military stations which provide two-way radio communication linking each Continental U. S. Army Headquarters with Posts, Camps, Stations or other military installations within the Army area.

Civilian stations continue the development and training of radio nets within each state and local community and stand ready to assist Army Commanders, especially as Civil Defense liaison and natural disaster communicators in areas not served by military unit stations.

On file at the appropriate Continental Army Headquarters, and also at MARS Headquarters, OCSigO, are jacket files on members and their equipment. A study of these records shows that each Continental Army area has an average of 150 civilian members who, by reason of age, occupation, status of health, or for other reasons are not likely to be eligible for active military duty in the event of mobilization or national emergency. This list includes handicapped persons (blind, crippled or other defects), housewives, farmers, school teachers, religious workers, retired and self-employed persons.

The total active membership in Army MARS consists of 231 military units; 1,340 military individuals and 1,476 civilians.

There are approximately 2,000 fixed stations and roughly 1,000 portable and/or mobile stations now in operation. Approximately 40 percent of the portable and/or mobile units are mobile.

MARS stations use military call signs and operate on military frequencies as follows:

Shared with tactical and ACAN -- 2220, 2258, 2360, 4020, 4025, 4080, 4085, 5500, and 5760 kcs;

Shared with Air Force MARS -- 3497.5, 6997.5, 14405, 20994 and 27794 kcs.

In all drills use of military procedures is stressed. In order to integrate MARS with established networks of the Armed Forces, JANAP/ACP procedures are taught and studied.

MARS members receive a MARS Bulletin, official publication of the Army and Air Force. They operate under authority granted by the Chief Signal Officer. Members of the Organized Reserve Corps who are in the Signal Corps or who have a communications assignment are entitled to earn retirement credits at the rate of one credit point for each two hours of MARS drill (not necessarily consecutive).

The present MARS organization functions as a series of integrated nets. Experience prior to World War II showed that unless a quasi-civilian organization such as MARS is organized and maintained under the control of the Army, it is of little or no benefit to the Army. Therefore, all direction and control are coordinated through regular Army channels.

Details of MARS operations are available from the Signal Officer at each Continental Army Headquarters. Correspondence should be addressed to:

The Commanding General

_____ Army

_____ City _____ State

ATTN: Signal Officer

NOTE: The name of the Military Amateur Radio System was changed on 2 Sep 1952, to the Military Affiliate Radio System. The short title still will remain MARS. The name was changed because the term "military affiliate" more clearly defines the relationship between the Armed Forces and individual members of the system.

EDITORS