

# 1 Military Auxiliary Radio System Navy-Marine Corps MARS

MARS Operator Course

3.01.a

06 SEP 2008

## Unit One Mission and Organization

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### **LESSON 1** **Mission of Navy-Marine Corps MARS**

103. The U.S. Navy's association with Amateur Radio dates back to the earliest days of wireless communications. Navy Radio, Arlington, "NAA" was commissioned by the Navy in 1913. This provided very desirable source of practice for receiving Morse code (CW). Many of the "old timers" cut their "CW" teeth on the weather reports, time signals, and notices to mariners emanating from the old landmark.

The U.S. Navy realized immediately the immense potential to be gained by a close relationship with Amateur Radio. The Navy took on a policy of encouragement and support. Within ten days of the United States entering World War I (on 7 April 1917) 500 of the 6000 U.S. radio amateurs enlisted for duty in the U.S. Navy. Before the end of the war, another 3500 amateurs had joined the Armed Forces. World War II saw over 25,000 Amateur Radio operators serving with the Armed Forces and many thousands more assisting in industry and war research work. These early associations with Amateur Radio have been the basis of a long and close relationship between the Navy and the Amateur Radio community in the U.S.

104. On 17 August 1962, the Secretary of the Navy approved a recommendation made by the Chief of Naval Operations to organize a Navy-Marine Corps MARS program. This program was implemented on 1 January 1963. (In unit 7 you will learn about some very interesting developments around this same time frame that lead to the inception of the SHARES program.)

105. On 30 November 1968, the Department of Defense issued a directive formalizing the composition, mission, functions, and the organization of the Military Auxiliary Radio System (MARS). It set forth policies concerning Department of Defense support of both MARS and civil Amateur Radio activities.

106. The mission of MARS is to provide Department of the Navy and Department of Defense sponsored emergency communications on a local, national, and international basis as an adjunct to normal naval communications. In emergencies, MARS helps to ensure normal naval communications and provides auxiliary communications (like warnings or instructions) to military, civilian, and/or disaster officials.

108. The primary concept of MARS is to meet the requirements of training for any communications emergency. To this end, organization, methods, and facilities must be adequate to meet any emergency requirements and must be flexible in order to provide for rapid expansion. Normal methods must be such that only minor changes will be required when shifting to an emergency status. Based upon the above concept, the following principles have been proven under all conditions. Reliability, security, and speed are the three fundamental requirements of MARS communications. Reliability is always paramount. It must never be sacrificed to achieve security or speed.

## LESSON 2

### Active Duty Organization

#### **200. Chief, Navy-Marine Corps MARS Authority**

The Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) has assigned Commander, Naval Computer and Telecommunications Area Master Station, Atlantic (CO NCTAMSLANT) as the central coordinator to act for the Secretary of the Navy (SECNAV) in exercising authority over and carrying out MARS responsibilities. CO NCTAMSLANT has vested Chief, Navy Marine Corps MARS (CHNAVMARCORMARS) with the authority to carry out the Department of the Navy's (DON) responsibilities towards MARS, per Department of Defense (DOD) Directive 4650.2 (series). Chief MARS may be an active duty Navy or Marine Corps officer or a civilian appointee.

212. The **Deputy Chief**, NAVMARCORMARS is the primary assistant to Chief, NAVMARCORMARS. This duty will normally be assigned to an active duty naval officer in the grade of Lieutenant (Junior Grade) or Chief Warrant Officer. All orders issued by him/her will have the same force and effect as though issued by the Chief. The Deputy Chief will conform to and carry out the policies and orders of the Chief and shall keep him/her informed of all significant matters pertaining to the command. The Deputy Chief shall be primarily responsible under the Chief, for the organization, performance of duty, and good order and discipline of the entire NAVMARCORMARS program.

215. NAVMARCORMARS **Station Chief Operator (CHOP)** is the Assistant to the Chief, Navy-Marine Corps MARS for administration and operation of the NAVMARCORMARS Radio Station (NAV). Operates, maintains and ensures the readiness and effectiveness of facilities and field activities of HQ NAVMARCORMARSTA (NAV). Operates a communications center for delivery and relay of MARS message traffic. Operates and maintains auxiliary communications facilities capable of providing emergency communications to the Department of the Navy in the event normal communications are disrupted, non-existent, or overloaded as a result of an emergency. Interfaces with the headquarters stations of both Army and Air Force MARS.

#### **220. MARS Area Directors**

There are four MARS areas: Northeast, Central, South, and Pacific. The area director is an active duty Navy billet, usually an Information Systems Technician chief petty officer, ITC (or possibly a senior chief or master chief). They are assigned to NCTAMSLANT billets and come under Chief, NAVMARCORMARS for operational direction.

MARS area directors are responsible for the administration and operation of the MARS program within their assigned area. More on staffing in the next lesson.

Within each area are regions comprised of two or more states. Primary day-to-day operations and administration are the responsibility of the state directors and their staff. Region directors work to facilitate and coordinate operations among the states within their region. A break down of the geographic assignments of areas, the regions within

each area, and the states within each region can be found on the NMC MARS National web page at <http://www.navymars.org/>

Depending on the subject matter the chain of command goes either directly from the state director to the area director, or from state to region, to area, to Chief MARS. This may seem a bit confusing at first. Just keep in mind that region directors and their staff are responsible for operational matters within the region. Administrative matters (such as new member applications, transfers, terminations, etc.) are handled by the area director. State directors are responsible for both within their area of responsibility (AOR).

New members need not worry too much about memorizing all the finer points of the structure. All matters should be addressed to the lowest echelon from which a response can be expected. As such, your primary contact for all your needs is your state director or his/her designated staff member for the subject matter. Remember, stay within the chain of command!

### LESSON 3 Volunteer Organization

223. The **area director** makes appropriate appointments of qualified individuals from the volunteer membership to serve as special assistants and advisors to the director and provides the necessary coordination and supervision of matters pertaining to the appointments. It is preferable that a person selected to an area staff position have been a member of MARS for at least four years.

The area director's administrative call sign with a numerical suffix will be assigned to each appointed assistant for use when conducting matters pertaining to the appointment. For example, the Deputy Director in Pacific Area will have the staff call of NNN0ASE ONE. State and region level staff follow the same concept as the area staff positions. Not every director will assign every position. If a position is not filled the duties of that position fall to the director.

224. The area staff positions are as follows:  
(keep in mind these designators are words, not figures)

ONE	Deputy Area Director
TWO	Emergency Communications Planning
THREE	Net Operations/Report
FOUR	Training
FIVE	Telecommunications (internet ops, web pages)
SIX	Special Projects and High Technology (Usually limited duration as opposed to on-going)
SEVEN	VHF and FM Repeaters
EIGHT	Public Affairs and Newsletters
NINE	Library
TEN	Digital Systems Operations
ELEVEN	Logistics
TWELVE	Equipment Administration
THIRTEEN	Personnel Administration
FOURTEEN	Computers/Data Processing
FIFTEEN	Army/Air Force MARS Liaison
SEVENTEEN	Military Auspices Station Coordinator
EIGHTEEN	Postage Stamp Coordinator

In addition, directors may authorize a staff member to have an assistant when the workload is significant. In such cases the assistant's designator will be the staff designator preceded by the word "TWO". For example, an assistant to NNN0GAF THREE would be NNN0GAF TWO THREE

The staffing designators are simply identifiers (these are words, not figures). Except for the ONE position they do not imply any ranking or seniority of one position over any other. These same modifiers are used at the area, region, and state levels. Note

however, that special assistants to Chief MARS have their own individual call signs. For example, Chief MARS' assistant for training is NNN0ASN.

Director's assistants serve as advisors to the director. They may interpret existing policy within the framework of their job assignment, but they do not establish policy. Only the respective director is authorized to make policy. Director's assistants are a great resource for information within their assigned area of expertise, however they are not in your chain of command. Chain of command is purely state director, region director, area director, Chief MARS/Deputy Chief MARS.

230. The **area deputy director** is a qualified volunteer member nominated by the area director and appointed by Chief, NAVMARCORMARS. The appointment is voluntary and therefore military orders, per se, cannot be enforced. However, it is reasonable to assume that the individual accepting the appointment will have no compunction against fulfilling the duties and carrying out the responsibilities of the position.

240. The **region director** is a qualified volunteer member nominated by the area director and appointed by Chief, NAVMARCORMARS. MARS region directors are responsible, under the area director, for MARS operations within their assigned regions.

Region directors make region staff appointments as deemed necessary for fulfilling the MARS mission and supporting the members within the region.

280. The **state director** is a qualified volunteer member appointed by the area director. The state director is responsible to assist the area director in MARS administrative matters, and the region director in operational matters, within the assigned State. The appointment is normally for a two year period that may be extended upon mutual agreement between the area director and the appointee.

State directors appoint state staff members as deemed necessary for fulfilling the MARS mission and supporting the members within the state.

### **260. Assistants to Chief MARS.**

Chief, NAVMARCORMARS may appoint qualified volunteer MARS members as special assistants when deemed necessary to assist and/or coordinate matters pertaining to the appointment. Special assistants are considered members of Chief, NAVMARCORMARS Advisory Staff. Chief MARS staff call signs do not follow the same format as area, region, and state staff (explained above). For example, Alaska's assistant director for training is NNN0GAB FOUR. The assistant to chief MARS for training is NNN0ASN. Normally, Chief MARS staff assignments are not a concern for members as your normal contact will be your state staff, region staff, and area staff, in that order. The exception will be regular members who become involved in specialty net ops, such as digital relaying systems (MBOs) or phone patch ops.

### **END UNIT ONE; Proceed to unit two**

You may, at any time, start work on the review test.